





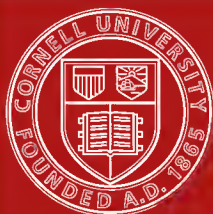
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FORERUNNERS AND RIVALS  
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# FORERUNNERS AND RIVALS OF CHRISTIANITY

BEING  
STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY  
FROM 330 B.C. TO 330 A.D.

BY  
F. LEGGE, F.S.A.  
(Honorary) Foreign Secretary Society of Biblical Archaeology,  
Member of Council Royal Asiatic Society,  
Member of Committee Egypt Exploration Fund, &c.

"The ghosts of words and dusty dreams"

"Old memories, faiths infirm and dead"

SWINBURNE, *Félise*.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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## PREFACE

THE following pages are a modest attempt to bring before the public certain documents of great importance for the understanding of the growth and development of the Christian religion. They are not new, almost all of them having been translated at one time or another into English, French, German, or Italian: but they are all practically unknown save to scholars, are all fragmentary, and with hardly an exception, are difficult to understand without a running commentary. In these circumstances, I have ventured to follow, not for the first time, the advice given by Sir Gaston Maspero to his pupils in one of his luminous lectures at the Collège de France. "If" said in effect that great master of archaeology, "you find yourselves in the presence of scattered and diverse examples of any monument you cannot understand—funerary cones, amulets of unusual form, hypocephali, or anything else—make a collection of them. Search museums, journals of Egyptology, proceedings of learned societies, until you think they have no more novelties of the kind to offer you. Then put those you have collected side by side and study them. The features they have in common will then readily appear and in a little time you will find that you will perceive not only the use of the objects in question, but also the history of their development, their connexion with each other, and their relative dates." This has been the end aimed at in this book; and although, like most aims in this world, it has not been perfectly achieved, it may, I think, be said with confidence

that these documents explain and supplement one another in a remarkable degree, and that in the majority of cases sense can now be read into what at first sight seemed to be nonsense. As more fragments of the same kind come to light, also, one has fair reason to hope that those points which are still obscure may be made clear.

The system of references adopted perhaps calls for some explanation. As I have no right to expect my readers to take what I say for gospel, I should have preferred to give my authority for every statement made by me in the text. But there are often many authorities supporting the same statement, and some discrimination between them was necessary unless these two volumes were to be swollen to an intolerable length. The same consideration for brevity, too, has often led me to quote at second or third hand rather than at first. References to well-known passages in the more widely read classical writers and Christian Fathers are not needed by scholarly readers, while to others they are difficult to check or verify. I have therefore deliberately and of choice preferred the less recondite sources to the more recondite, and have never hesitated to refer the reader to encyclopaedias, popular lectures, and the works avowedly addressed to the general public of writers like Renan and Mahaffy, rather than to the sources from which they have themselves drawn their information. In so doing, however, I have never consciously failed to check the statement quoted with the original source, and to see, so far as in me lay, that it correctly represents its purport. A fairly long experience has convinced me that to many readers the "Apoll. Rhod. ac Nigid. Schuster, p. 41" and the "Clemens de div. serv. Su 20" dear to certain German professors and their English admirers mean very little, and to the greater public nothing at all. For the translations which appear in the text or notes I have gleaned from all sources, but, except where expressly

mentioned, I must personally accept all responsibility for them, and in cases in which any doubt seemed possible I have generally added the words of the original document.

Finally, I have not attempted to impress my own opinion on my readers, but merely to give them the material on which they can form their own; and where I have found myself in doubt as to what the facts of the case really were, I have never scrupled to say so. This is not a counsel of perfection, but the one which on the whole seemed to me best. If by doing so I have succeeded in sending to the documents themselves a few readers hitherto ignorant of them, I shall think I have not wasted my time.

F. LEGGE.

6 GRAY'S INN SQUARE,  
*July 1914.*

P.S. The outbreak of the war has caused the publication of this book to be postponed. I regret the delay the less that it has enabled me to make use of several works and studies which have appeared during the last twelve months.

F. L.

## ERRATA

### VOL. I.

- p. 121, l. 5, for *Xerxes* read *Darius*.  
p. 141, n. 4, for Prof. C. R. B. Weidmann read Prof. Carl Robert.

### VOL. II.

- p. 18, n. 2, for cc. III, xxxi. Justin Martyr read cc. III, xxxi; Justin Martyr.  
p. 36, n. 1, for Isidore Loeb, *La Cabbale juive*, p. 587. F. Herman Krüger, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, s.v. Gnosticisme read Isidore Loeb, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, s.v. La Cabbale juive; *ibid.* F. Herman Krüger, s.v. Gnosticisme.  
p. 37, n. 1, for Thou the King, the Aeon of Aeons read Thou King, Aeon of Aeons.  
p. 38, n. 3, for Introduction (pp. xx—xxiii) read Introduction (pp. lxi—lxiii).  
p. 69, n. 3, for השטפה read חשטפה.  
p. 72, l. 4, for boundless read thoughtless.  
p. 102, l. 22, for Ecclesiasticis read Ecclesiasticus.  
p. 129, n. 3, for Canons read Canon.  
p. 146, l. 17, for its read Its.  
p. 146, n. 2, for the Five Words, translated in the text read the five words translated in the text.  
p. 166, n. 2, for 18 Eons read 18 Aeons.  
p. 174, l. 1, for die read dies.  
p. 183, l. 10, for *Books* read *Texts*.  
p. 200, l. 10, for *Pistis Sophia* read *Texts of the Saviour*.  
p. 338, n. 2, for *Journal des Savants* read *Journal des Savans*.

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## TABLE OF DATES

N.B. The dates which follow are only approximate, no attempt having here been made to harmonize the system of chronology lately adopted by the professors of the Berlin school with those formerly in use. For the dates of the reigns of the Egyptian and Asiatic Successors of Alexander, I have mainly relied upon the excellent work of M. Bouché-Leclercq as given in his French version of Droysen's *Hellenismus*, his *Histoire des Lagides* and (especially) his *Histoire des Séleucides*, the second volume of which, containing the chronological tables, maps, and indexes, has appeared at the close of this year (1914). The dates of the Parthian and Bactrian kings are given with all reserve and are in effect conjectures based on the slipshod statements of compilers like Justin, Quintus Curtius, and Trogus Pompeius. For the Parthian dates I have followed, though without any confidence in its accuracy, the chronology of Prof. Eduard Meyer, and for the Bactrian, those given in Mr H. C. Rawlinson's *Bactria*.

The dates in Vol. II, which deals with the centuries after Christ, are for the most part fairly well ascertained, and those given in Prof. Bury's edition of Gibbon have been used wherever possible. For matters not mentioned in Gibbon, such as the lives of the obscurer Christian Fathers and leaders of sects, recourse has generally been had to Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* and other books of the kind. The only serious discrepancy here noticeable arises from the habit still prevalent among certain Continental writers of beginning the Christian Era four years earlier than others, so as to increase all subsequent dates by 4. Thus M. Cumont, in his *Mystères de Mithra* and elsewhere, invariably gives the date of the Carnuntum inscription proclaiming Mithras the Protector of the Roman Empire, as 307 A.D., although he asserts that the *Iovii et Herculi religiosissimi Augusti* responsible for the inscription are Diocletian and Galerius. Diocletian, however, resigned the purple, and retired into private life in the year 305 A.D., by the reckoning of Prof. Bury and others, and it is plain therefore that M. Cumont puts the date too far forward according to our ideas. To bring it into line, I have therefore ventured to alter the date of the inscription quoted by him to 304 A.D., which would moreover coincide with the persecution of the Christians, which he thinks may have owed some of its severity to the rivalry of the Mithraic faith. The same procedure has been followed in one or two other cases.

**B.C.**

336. Accession of Alexander.

340 to 260. Zeno of Citium (founder of Stoic school) flourished.

340 to 288. Pyrrho of Elis flourished.

334 to 322. Aristotle and first Peripatetic School flourished.

331. Foundation of Alexandria.

Alexander transports many Jews to Alexandria and gives them equal rights with Macedonians.

330. Death of Darius.

326. Alexander conquers Punjab.

324. Alexander at Susa celebrates marriage of Europe and Asia.

323. Death of Alexander and first division of Empire.

Ptolemy, son of Lagos, made satrap of Egypt.

321. Second division of Alexander's Empire at Triparadisus.

320. Ptolemy captures Jerusalem and transports many Jews to Alexandria.

*Circa* 316. Euhemerus of Messene flourished.

312. Ptolemy and Seleucus defeat Demetrius Poliorcetes at Gaza.

Ptolemy seizes Syria, but evacuates it when defeated by Demetrius near Myontes.

Many Jews voluntarily emigrate to Egypt.

312. Seleucus conquers Media and Persia, and enters Babylon in triumph.

Beginning of Seleucid Era.

310. Antigonus Monophthalmos by treaty abandons Eastern Provinces to Seleucus.

307. Demetrius Poliorcetes at Athens.

Demetrius of Phalerum leaves Athens for Alexandria.

Probable foundation of Museum.

306 to 270. Epicurus flourished.

306. Ptolemy I Soter proclaims himself King of Egypt.

302. Coalition against Antigonus. Ptolemy invades Syria, and Lysimachus Asia Minor.

301. Battle of Ipsus, and further division of Empire between Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Cassander.

300 to 220. Cleanthus of Assos (Stoic philosopher) flourished.

298. Cession of Valley of Indus by Seleucus to Chandragupta.

297. Destruction of Samaria by Demetrius Poliorcetes.

294. Seleucus transports many Jews from Babylon to Antioch and other Syrian cities.

293. Many Jewish colonies founded in Cyrene and Libya.

292. Seleucus gives his wife Stratonice and the Eastern Provinces to his son Antiochus.

288. Coalition against Demetrius Poliorcetes.

Accession of Bindusara (Amitrochates) to Chandragupta's Indian Kingdom.

283. Accession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

B.C.

283. Demetrius Poliorcetes dies a prisoner in the hands of Seleucus.
282. Seleucus conquers Asia Minor from Lysimachus.
281. Lysimachus defeated and slain at Corupedion.  
Accession of Antiochus I Soter on assassination of Seleucus.
- 280.? Establishment of Greek worship of Serapis, Isis, and Horus at Alexandria.
- 280 to 207. Chrýsippus of Soli (Stoic philosopher) flourished.
280. Pyrrhus invades Italy.  
Invasion of Thrace by Celtic tribes.
278. Pyrrhus' campaign in Italy.
277. Settlement of Celtic tribes (Galatae) in Asia.
276. Translation of Pentateuch into Greek by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus.
274. First Syrian War. Ptolemy Philadelphus against Antiochus Soter and Magas of Cyrene.
273. Ptolemy Philadelphus sends embassy to Rome to conclude alliance.
265. Accession of Asoka, grandson of Chandragupta.
264. Asoka's missions to Greek Kings.  
First Punic War.
261. Accession of Antiochus II Theos.
258. Second Syrian War. Ptolemy Philadelphus against Antiochus Theos.
252. Diodotus revolts against Antiochus Theos and founds Kingdom of Bactria.
250. Association of Greek Sarapiasts at Athens.
249. Arsaces revolts against Antiochus Theos and founds Arsacid Kingdom of Parthia.
248. Accession of Tiridates on death of his brother, Arsaces of Parthia.
247. Accession of Seleucus II Callinicus on death of his father, Antiochus Theos.
246. Accession of Ptolemy III Euergetes.  
Third Syrian War. Ptolemy Euergetes against Seleucus Callinicus.
- 245.? Accession of Diodotus II on death of his father, Diodotus of Bactria.
244. Ptolemy Euergetes overruns Upper Asia as far as Susa.
241. War between Seleucus Callinicus and his brother Antiochus Hierax.  
Accession of Attalus as dynast of Pergamum.
238. Ptolemy Euergetes and his wife Berenice II deified. Decree of Canopus.  
Attalus defeats Galatae and proclaims himself King of Pergamum.
230. Euthydemus of Magnesia seizes throne of Bactria on death of Diodotus II.
229. Rome first intervenes in affairs of Greece on behalf of Acarnanians.
226. Accession of Seleucus III Soter on death of his father, Seleucus Callinicus.

**B.C.**

- 225. Attalus of Pergamum, "Friend of Rome," defeats Seleucus Soter and seizes Syrian Asia Minor.
- 222. Accession of Antiochus III the Great, on assassination of his father, Seleucus Soter.
- 221. Accession of Ptolemy IV Philopator on death of his father, Ptolemy Euergetes.
- 219. Antiochus the Great reconquers Asia Minor.  
Antiochus the Great captures Jerusalem from Ptolemy Philopator.
- 217. Antiochus the Great transports 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon to Phrygia and Lydia.  
Ptolemy Philopator defeats Antiochus the Great at Raphia and recaptures Jerusalem and Samaria.  
Second Punic War.
- 216. Worship of Greek Sarapis and Isis established in Boeotia.
- 211. Accession of Artabanus I to throne of Parthia on death of his father Tiridates.
- 210. Artabanus of Parthia attacked by Antiochus the Great, who besieges his capital, but finally makes alliance with him.  
First Macedonian War. Romans and Aetolians against Philip.
- 205. Accession of Ptolemy V Epiphanes.  
Antiochus the Great seizes Palestine.
- ✓ 204. Statue of Great Mother brought from Pessinus to Rome.  
Scopas reconquers Palestine for Ptolemy Epiphanes and Jews revolt to latter.
- 200. Second Macedonian War.
- 198. Antiochus the Great defeats Scopas at Panion and reoccupies Jerusalem and Samaria.
- 197. Accession of Eumenes II on death of his father, Attalus of Pergamum.  
Philip defeated by Romans at Cynoscephalae.
- 196. Coronation of Ptolemy Epiphanes at Memphis. Rosetta Stone set up.
- 191. Ptolemy Epiphanes sends embassy to Rome to offer alliance.
- 190. Romans defeat Antiochus the Great at Magnesia.  
Accession of Demetrius on death of Euthydemus of Bactria.  
Accession of Priapatus on death of Artabanus of Parthia.
- 187. Accession of Seleucus IV Philopator on death of his father, Antiochus the Great.
- 182. Accession of Ptolemy VI Eupator.
- 181. Accession of Ptolemy VII Philometor.
- 180. Serapeum at Delos in existence.
- 175. Demetrius of Bactria annexes Cabul and Punjab.  
Accession of Antiochus IV Epiphanes on death of his brother, Seleucus Philopator.

B.C.

175. Eucratides rebels against Demetrius of Bactria and seizes throne.
173. Antiochus Epiphanes seizes Judaea and Coele-Syria.
172. Third Macedonian War.
171. Antiochus Epiphanes invades Egypt and defeats Ptolemy Philometor at Pelusium.
170. Antiochus Epiphanes plunders Temple of Jerusalem.  
Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Euergetes II made joint kings by Romans.  
Accession of Mithridates I to throne of Parthia.
168. Antiochus Epiphanes' second invasion of Egypt stopped by Romans.  
Circle of Popilius Laena.
166. Antiochus Epiphanes again pillages Temple and persecutes Jewish religion.  
Samaritans make peace with Antiochus Epiphanes and accept Hellenization.  
Revolt of Maccabees against Syria.
164. Accession of Antiochus V Eupator on death of his father, Antiochus Epiphanes.
162. Judas Maccabaeus besieged in Jerusalem by Lysias for Antiochus Eupator. Peace made on Philip's attempt to seize regency.  
Romans send embassy to Antiochus Eupator which compels him to burn his ships and kill his elephants.  
Demetrius escapes from Rome and invades Syria.
161. Romans recognize Demetrius as King of Syria with title of Demetrius I Soter.  
Judas Maccabaeus sends embassy to Rome, is attacked by Demetrius Soter, and slain. Judaea, under his brother Jonathan, submits to Syria.  
Timarchos, Satrap of Media, and Ptolemy, dynast of Commagene, proclaim themselves Kings, and are recognized by Romans.
160. Ptolemy Philometor expelled from Egypt by Euergetes II, but restored by Romans.  
Ptolemy, son of Glaucias, a recluse in Serapeum of Memphis.
159. Accession of Attalus II Philadelphus on death of his brother, Eumenes of Pergamum.
154. Ptolemy Euergetes II made King of Cyrene.  
Foundation of Jewish Temple or Oneion at Leontopolis in Egypt.
152. Alexander Bala, pretender to throne of Syria, recognized by Romans as son of Antiochus Epiphanes.
151. Coalition of Egyptian and Asiatic Kings with Romans against Demetrius Soter of Syria.
150. Demetrius Soter defeated and slain by coalition of Egyptian and Asiatic kings. Alexander Bala succeeds to throne of Syria, and marries Cleopatra Thea, daughter of Ptolemy Philometor.

B.C.

149. Third Punic War.

145. Ptolemy Philometor invades Syria and defeats Alexander Bala at Oenoparas. Ptolemy killed in battle and Alexander by Nabathaeans.

Accession of Ptolemy IX (Euergetes II) Physcon as sole king of Egypt.

Accession of Demetrius II Nicator to throne of Syria. Civil war between Demetrius and Diodotus (Trypho) as regent for infant Antiochus VI Epiphanes Dionysos.

144. Ptolemy Physcon expels philosophers from Museum.

142. Simon Maccabaeus succeeds as High Priest Jonathan slain by Trypho. Simon Maccabaeus proclaims independence of Judaea.

141. Simon Maccabaeus sends embassy to Romans who receive Jews as "Friends of Rome."

140. Mithridates I of Parthia seizes part of Bactria, Media, Susiana, and Persia.

139. Demetrius Nicator invades Parthia and is taken prisoner by Mithridates.

Beginning of Era of Arsacides.

Antiochus VI Epiphanes Dionysos murdered by Trypho, who is made King by army.

138. Accession of Attalus III Philometor on death of his father, Attalus II of Pergamum.

Accession of Phraates II to throne of Parthia.

137. Antiochus VII Sidetes, brother of Demetrius Nicator, takes throne of Syria.

135. Antiochus Sidetes defeats Trypho, who commits suicide, at Apamea. John and Judas Maccabaeus, sons of Simon, defeat, at Modein, army of Antiochus Sidetes.

Simon Maccabaeus assassinated by his son-in-law Ptolemy.

John Hyrcanus succeeds his father Simon as High Priest.

Hierocles, last Greek King of Bactria, after invasion of Sacae, transfers his capital to Sialkôt.

Attalus of Pergamum bequeaths his kingdom to Romans.

134. Siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus Sidetes. Jews made tributaries to Syria.

130. Antiochus Sidetes invades Parthia and reconquers Babylonia and Media.

Menander (the Milinda of Buddhists) King of Cabul and Punjab.

129. John Hyrcanus sends embassy to Rome for help against Syria.

Medes rebel against Antiochus Sidetes, who is defeated by Phraates II of Parthia and commits suicide.

Restoration of Demetrius Nicator to throne of Syria. Phraates II of Parthia slain in battle against Scythians.

B.C.

129. Accession of Artabanus II of Parthia.
  126. Demetrius Nicator defeated and slain by pretender, Alexander Zabina.
  125. Destruction of Samaria by John Hyrcanus.
  124. Accession of Mithridates II the Great on death of Artabanus II in battle against Tocharians.
  122. Accession of Antiochus VIII Grypus, son of Demetrius Nicator, who with the help of Egypt defeats and slays Alexander Zabina.
  120. Accession of Mithridates Eupator as King of Pontus.
  117. Accession of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X Lathyrus.  
Civil war in Syria between Antiochus Grypus and Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, son of Antiochus Sidetes. Division of Syria between them.
  113. Antiochus Cyzicenus invades Judaea, and is ordered by Romans to withdraw.
  106. Accession of Ptolemy XI Alexander.  
Aristobulus succeeds his father, John Hyrcanus, as High Priest, and proclaims himself King.
  105. Municipality of Puteoli builds Serapeum.  
Aristobulus of Judaea annexes Iturea.  
Alexander Jannaeus succeeds, as King, his brother Aristobulus.
  98. Alexander Jannaeus, trying to annex Ptolemais and Gaza, is defeated by Ptolemy Lathyrus, then King of Cyprus.  
Alexander Jannaeus makes league with Cleopatra III, who compels Ptolemy to withdraw.
  96. Alexander Jannaeus captures Gaza and massacres inhabitants.  
Accession of Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator on assassination of his father, Antiochus Grypus.
  95. Antiochus X Pius, son of Antiochus Cyzicenus, defeats and slays Seleucus Epiphanes near Mopsuestia.
  94. Division of Syria. Antiochus Pius reigns in Upper Syria, Philip I and Demetrius III Eucærus, sons of Antiochus Grypus, in Coele-Syria.
  93. Antiochus Pius slain in battle against the Parthians in Commagene. Ariobarzanes, King of Cappadocia, expelled by Mithridates Eupator of Pontus, but reinstated by Romans under Sulla.
  89. Alexander Jannaeus crucifies 800 Pharisees at Bethome and restores peace in Judaea.
  88. Demetrius Eucærus invades Judaea and defeats Alexander Jannaeus at Sicheu, but is taken prisoner by Parthians and dies in captivity.
- Interregnum in Parthia.  
First Mithridatic War.

B.C.

87. Antiochus XII Dionysos, son of Antiochus Grypus, crowned King of Syria at Damascus.
84. Sulla makes peace with Mithridates.  
Antiochus Dionysos defeated and slain at Motho by Aretas the Philhellene, King of Nabathaeans.
83. Tigranes, King of Armenia, becomes King of Syria.
82. Sulla dictator.
81. Accession of Ptolemy XII Alexander II.  
Accession of Ptolemy XIII Auletes.
- ✓ Circa 80. College of Pastophori of Greek Isis at Rome founded.
79. Death of Alexander Jannaeus, and accession of his widow, Salome Alexandra.
78. Death of Sulla.
77. Tigranes builds Tigranocerta, and transports thither many peoples of different race.
76. The Arsacid Sinatroces, captive among the Scyths, released by them to become King of Parthia.
75. Second Mithridatic War.
74. Nicomedes of Bithynia bequeaths his kingdom to Mithridate Eupator of Pontus.  
Third Mithridatic War.
72. Mithridates, defeated by Lucullus, takes refuge with his son-in-law Tigranes.
70. Accession of Phraates III of Parthia.
69. Tigranes invades Palestine, but is bought off by Salome Alexandra. Tigranes defeated and Tigranocerta taken by Lucullus.  
Antiochus XIII Asiaticus, son of Antiochus Pius, made King of Syria.  
Death of Salome Alexandra, and accession of her son Aristobulus as King, with John Hyrcanus II as High Priest.
67. Pompey suppresses the Cilician pirates. Reported introduction of Mysteries of Mithras into Italy.
66. Phraates III of Parthia, Friend of Rome, invades Armenia. Tigranes submits to Pompey, and is allowed to retain Great Armenia. Civil war in Palestine between Aristobulus and John Hyrcanus II.
65. Siege of Jerusalem by Nabathaeans and Pharisees, raised by command of Pompey's lieutenant Scarus.
64. Ariarathes, King of Cappadocia, receives from Romans Lesser Armenia, Gordyene, and Sophene.  
Osrhoene and Edessa made into separate kingdom under Arab prince Ariamne.  
Syria becomes Roman province.
63. Death of Mithridates Eupator.  
Death of Antiochus Asiaticus.



**B.C.**

61. Pompey captures Jerusalem, and puts an end to Maccabæan Kingdom. Aristobulus sent captive to Rome.  
Samaria and all forcibly Judaized communities regain their autonomy.
58. Ptolemy Auletes, expelled from Egypt, flies to Rome.  
Statues of Isis at Rome thrown down by order of Consul, A. Gabinius.
57. Alexander, son of Aristobulus of Judæa, rebels, and is defeated by Gabinius, Proconsul of Syria.
56. Aristobulus escapes from Rome and heads new revolt in Judæa.
55. Accession of Orodes I to throne of Parthia.  
Fresh revolt of Jews under Alexander suppressed by Gabinius, who makes Antipater the Idumean ruler of Judæa.  
Ptolemy Auletes restored to throne of Egypt by Gabinius.
53. Crassus and Roman army defeated by Parthians at Carrhæ.
52. Fresh revolt of Jews suppressed by Cassius.
51. Accession of Cleopatra VI and Ptolemy XIV.
50. Temple of Isis at Rome destroyed by Consul, L. Aemilius Paulus.
48. Julius Caesar and Cleopatra besieged in Alexandria by Egyptian rebels. Death of Ptolemy XIV.  
Temples of Isis near Capitol thrown down at bidding of augurs.
47. Cleopatra made queen jointly with Ptolemy XV.  
Antipater and Jewish troops take part in raising of siege of Alexandria.  
Julius Caesar repeals Jewish tribute and liability to military service, and gives Jews religious liberty and self-government.  
John Hyrcanus II made hereditary ethnarch of Judæa.
46. Herod, son of Antipater, enters Roman army and is made military governor of Coele-Syria.
45. Death of Ptolemy XV. Cleopatra makes her son Caesarion co-regent with her as Ptolemy XVI.  
Hermaeus last Greek ruler in India.
44. Assassination of Julius Caesar.  
Fresh revolt of Jews on Caesar's death suppressed by Cassius, who makes Herod Procurator of Coele-Syria.
43. Triumvirs Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus decree temple to Isis and Serapis.
42. Battle of Philippi and division of Roman world between Mark Antony and Octavian.
41. Death of Antipater of Judæa. Mark Antony makes Herod and his brother Phasael joint tetrarchs under John Hyrcanus II.
40. Pacorus, prince of Parthia, invades Palestine, and takes John Hyrcanus II and Phasael away captive.
39. Parthians driven out of Palestine by P. Ventidius Bassus.  
Herod proclaimed King of Judæa by Romans.

## B.C.

38. Caius Sossius, Legate of Syria, captures Jerusalem, and puts Herod on throne.
31. Battle of Actium. Herod deserts Mark Antony.
30. Herod makes submission to Octavian, and receives increase of territory.  
Death of Cleopatra and Caesarion. Egypt becomes Roman province.  
Octavian becomes Emperor with title of Augustus.
28. Augustus orders all temples of Alexandrian gods outside *Pomoerium*.
21. M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the consul, forbids celebration of Egyptian rites within 1 mile of Rome.
20. Phraates IV of Parthia sends Augustus his four sons as hostages, and returns Roman standards captured with Crassus.  
Herod rebuilds Temple of Jerusalem.
4. Death of Herod. Fresh revolt of Jews suppressed by Varus.  
Augustus divides Herod's Kingdom between the tetrarchs Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip.

## A.D.

2. Accession of Phraates V or Phraataces on murder of his father, Phraates IV of Parthia.
5. Accession of Orodes II of Parthia.
6. Archelaus deposed and banished. Judaea becomes a Roman province.
8. Accession of Vonones I of Parthia.
14. Accession of Tiberius.
16. Vonones expelled from Parthia by Artabanus, King of Media.  
Artabanus makes war on Rome, and is in turn expelled.
19. Expulsion of Jewish colony from Rome.  
Tiberius destroys Temple of Isis and throws statues into the Tiber.
24. Death of Philip, Jewish tetrarch.
26. Pontius Pilate appointed Procurator of Judaea.
36. ? John the Baptist put to death by Antipas.  
Interregnum in Parthia. Struggle between pretenders, Tiridates II, Cumianus, and Bardanes I.
37. Accession of Caligula.  
Antipas defeated by Aretas, King of Nabathaeans.  
Agrippa receives Philip's tetrarchy with title of King.
39. Antipas deposed and banished. His tetrarchy added to Agrippa's kingdom.
41. Judaea added to Agrippa's kingdom.  
Accession of Claudius.
44. Death of Agrippa. Cuspius Fadus made Procurator of Judaea.
47. Tiberius Alexander (nephew of Philo) succeeds Cuspius as Procurator.

A.D.

47. Gotarzes, son of Artabanus of Media, having been expelled from Parthia by his brother Bardanes, retakes crown on Bardanes' death.
48. Revolt of Jews. Tiberius Alexander replaced by Cumanus.
- Circa* 50. Clement of Rome born: died about 95 A.D.
51. Accession of Vonones II to throne of Parthia followed immediately by that of Vologeses I.  
War between Rome and Parthia.  
Temple of Isis at Rome rebuilt.
52. Ummidius Quadratus, Legate of Syria, deposes Cumanus, and appoints Felix Procurator of Judaea.
54. Accession of Nero.
55. Nero makes worship of Greek Isis *religio licita*.
60. Porcius Festus succeeds Felix as Procurator of Judaea.
62. Death of Porcius. Albinus succeeds him.  
Persecution of Christians by Ananus, the High Priest.  
Martyrdom of James the Just.
63. Vologeses I of Parthia, defeated by Corbulo, signs treaty of peace.
64. Gessius Florus succeeds Albinus as Procurator of Judaea.
66. Tiridates invested King of Armenia by Nero.  
Revolt of the Jews. Roman garrison of Jerusalem massacred after surrender. Cestius Gallus, Legate of Syria, attacks Jerusalem, but is beaten off.
67. First Jewish War. Vespasian replaces Cestius as Legate.
68. Accession of Galba.
69. Accession of Otho.  
Otho appears in public in dress of priest of Isis.  
Domitian escapes from Capitol in similar dress.  
Accession of Vitellius.  
Vespasian consults oracle, and works miraculous cures, in Temple of Isis at Alexandria.
70. Accession of Vespasian.  
Siege and sack of Jerusalem by Titus. Burning of Herod's Temple.
- 70-107. St Ignatius flourished.
72. Vespasian deposes Antiochus IV of Commagene, last of Seleucides.
77. Accession of Vologeses II of Parthia. Many pretenders, some of whom reign concurrently with him till his death.
79. Accession of Titus.
80. Domitian rebuilds Temple of Isis which had been burned.  
Statius mentions Mithraic Tauroctony in his *Thebaid*
81. Accession of Domitian.
- Circa* 83. Earliest Mithraic Inscription known.
96. Accession of Nerva.
98. Accession of Trajan.

## A.D.

*Circa* 100. Marcion born; died about 165.

Menander, Simon Magus's successor, flourished.

102. Earliest dated Mithraic Inscription by T. Claudius Livianus, Praetorian Prefect.

113-117. War between Rome and Parthia.

116. Revolt of Jews throughout East suppressed by Lucius Quietus.

117. Accession of Hadrian.

117-138. Basilides the Egyptian flourished.

*Circa* 120. Hadrian places in his *lararium* images of Greek Serapis and Isis.

120-160. Tatian flourished.

121. Justin Martyr born: martyred about 151.

*Circa* 125. Saturninus of Antioch flourished.

130. Hadrian rebuilds Jerusalem and names it Aelia Capitolina.

*Circa* 130. Apelles the Marcionite born: died about 180.

132. Revolt of Jews, under the Messiah Bar Cochba, and War of Extermination.

138. Accession of Antoninus Pius.

138-160. Valentinus the Gnostic flourished.

*Circa* 140. Cerdo the Syrian flourished.

147. Irenaeus of Lyons born: died about 202.

Vologeses III restores Parthian Kingdom, and collects books of Avesta.

150. Tertullian born: died about 220 A.D.

*Circa* 150. Marcus the magician flourished.

*Hermas Pastor* appears.

155. Clement of Alexandria born: died about 211.

Bardesanes or Ibn Daisan born: died about 223.

162. War between Rome and Parthia. Parthian Kings substitute Aramaic for Greek on their coins.

164. Destruction of Parthian capital, Seleucia on the Tigris, by Avidius Cassius.

170. Heracleon the Valentinian born: died about 210.

*Circa* 170. Lucian the Marcionite flourished.

Ptolemy the Valentinian flourished.

170-183. Theophilus of Antioch flourished.

179. Pantaenus founds Christian school at Alexandria.

180. Accession of Commodus.

185. Origen of Alexandria born: died about 253.

191. Accession of Vologeses IV to throne of Parthia.

193. Accession of Pertinax. Murder of Pertinax, and sale of Empire by Praetorians to Didius Julianus.

Accession of Septimius Severus.

195. War between Rome and Parthia.

*Circa* 200. Axionicus the Valentinian flourished.

A.D.

209. Accession of Artabanus IV of Parthia.
211. Accession of Caracalla and Geta.
216. Birth of Manes: died 275.  
War between Rome and Parthia.
217. Accession of Macrinus.
219. Accession of Heliogabalus.
221. Alexander Severus proclaimed Caesar.
222. Accession of Alexander Severus.  
War between Rome and Parthia.
- Circa* 222. Hippolytus of Porta Romana flourished.
226. Ardeshr̄, son of Sassan, conquers Artabanus IV of Parthia, and  
founds Sassanid dynasty of Persia.
230. War between Rome and Persia.
235. Accession of Maximin.  
Persecution of Christians.
238. Accession and death of the two Gordians.  
Maximus and Balbinus proclaimed Emperors with Gordian III as  
Caesar, but are murdered by Praetorians.  
Accession of Gordian III.  
Manes begins to teach.
241. Accession of Sapor (Shap̄r) I of Persia on death of his father Ardeshr̄.
242. War between Rome and Persia.
244. Accession of Philip the Arabian.
246. M. Julius Philippus proclaimed Augustus jointly with his father,  
Philip the Arabian.
249. Accession of Decius.  
Persecution of Christians.
251. Accession of Gallus.
253. Accession of Valerian.  
Gallienus proclaimed Augustus jointly with his father Valerian.
254. First appearance of Franks, who attack Rhine and invade Spain and  
Africa.
260. War between Rome and Persia.  
Valerian taken prisoner by Sapor, and dies in captivity.
- 260-268. Reign of Gallienus and the Thirty Tyrants.  
Right of Church to hold property recognized.
268. Accession of Claudius.
270. Accession of Aurelian.  
St Anthony introduces monachism into Church.
272. Accession of Hormisdas (Ormuz) I of Persia.
273. Aurelian captures Palmyra, and puts an end to Zenobia's Kingdom.  
Aurelian decides case of Paul of Samosata, and affirms primacy of  
Roman Church.
273. Accession of Varanes (Bahram) I of Persia.

A.D.

275. Manes put to death by Varanes I.  
Accession of Tacitus.
276. Accession of Varanes II of Persia.  
Accession of Probus.
282. Accession of Carus.
283. Carinus proclaimed Augustus jointly with his father Carus.
284. Numerian proclaimed Augustus jointly with his brother Carinus on death of Carus.  
Accession of Diocletian.
286. Maximian proclaimed Augustus jointly with Diocletian.
287. Edict of Diocletian against Manichaeans. Teachers to be burned:  
Hearers' goods to be confiscated.
292. Constantius Chlorus and Galerius proclaimed Caesars under the two Augusti.
293. Accession of Varanes III of Persia followed by that of Narses.
296. War between Rome and Persia.
- Circa* 300. Alexander of Lycopolis flourished.
302. Accession of Hormisdas II of Persia.
303. Persecution of Christians. Era of Martyrs.
304. Mithras declared at Carnuntum Protector of Roman Empire.
305. Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian.  
Constantius Chlorus and Galerius become Augusti.  
Maximin and Severus proclaimed Caesars.
306. Death of Constantius Chlorus. Constantine proclaimed Augustus by army, but allowed title of Caesar only by Galerius.  
Severus proclaimed Augustus in place of Constantius Chlorus.  
Maximian and Maxentius, his son, rebel.
307. Severus, besieged in Ravenna by Maximian, surrenders and commits suicide.  
Maximian gives his daughter Fausta to Constantine, and proclaims him Augustus jointly with himself.  
War of Augusti, Maximian, Maxentius, and Constantine, against Galerius, who proclaims Licinius and Maximin Augusti jointly with himself.
308. Maximian plots against Constantine, who puts him to death.  
Ephrem Syrus born: died 373.
310. Accession of Sapor II of Persia.
311. Death of Galerius; Licinius and Maximin divide Eastern provinces between them.
312. War between Constantine and Maxentius, who is defeated at Turin, Verona, and Saxa Rubra, and slain.  
Edict of Toleration by Constantine and Licinius.
313. Maximin declares war against Licinius, but is defeated at Heraclea and slain.

**A.D.**

314. War between Constantine and Licinius, who is defeated and makes peace.
315. Pachomius groups monks together in monasteries and institutes common life.
- 316?. Death of Diocletian.
320. Epiphanius of Constantia born: died about 400 A.D.
323. War between Constantine and Licinius, who is defeated and put to death.  
Constantine becomes sole Emperor.  
Constantine issues renewed edict of toleration.
- 324?. Constantine directs enquiry into Manichaeian doctrines by Musonianus (Strategius), Praetorian Prefect of the East.
325. Constantine summons Council of Nicaea.
327. Foundation of Constantinople and transfer of capital of Empire thither.
337. Baptism and death of Constantine.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE worships, beliefs, and religious practices of the age which saw the birth and infancy of Christianity must always be the most interesting of all subjects to the student of history, nor are there many more deserving the attention of the general reader. The opponent, quite as much as the adherent of Christianity, must admit that the early struggles of the faith which is professed by nearly a third of the human race, which for fifteen centuries wielded unchallenged sway over the whole of Europe, and which has grown with the growth of European colonization until it now has a firm settlement in every quarter of the inhabited world, must ever possess surpassing interest for humanity. Yet the popular ideas on the subject are not only vague but erroneous. A general notion that, shortly before the coming of Christ, the Pagans had tired of their old gods, and, lost to all sense of decency, had given themselves up to an unbridled immorality founded on atheistic ideas, is probably about as far as the man who has given no special study to the subject would venture to go. Such a view, founded perhaps on somewhat misty recollections of the Roman satirists and a little secondhand knowledge of the denunciations of the early Christian writers, is almost the reverse of the truth. There has probably been no time in the history of mankind when all classes were more given up to thoughts of religion, or when they strained more fervently after high ethical ideals, than in the six centuries which have been taken for the subject of this book<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For the pre-Christian centuries, the rise of ethical religions like that of the Greek Isis (see Chap. II *infra*) and of Mithras (see Chap. XII) is perhaps sufficient proof of this. For the post-Christian, see Tertullian's remarks as to the interest excited among the heathens by problems like the origin of evil (*de Praescript.* c. vii.). As to their striving after morality, see Eugène de Faye, "Formation d'une Doctrine de Dieu au II<sup>e</sup> Siècle," *Rev. Hist. Rel.* t. LXIII. (Jan.-Fev. 1911) pp. 1, 2, for authorities. See, too, Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1890, pp. 291, 292 and Harnack as there quoted.

The cause of this misconception is, however, clear enough. Half a century ago, the general public was without guide or leader in such matters, nor had they any materials on which to form opinions of their own. The classical education which was all that the majority of men then got, carefully left all such matters as the origins of Christianity on one side. The treatises of the Fathers of the Church, for the most part written in late and inelegant Greek, were held to be too corrupting to the style of scholars reared on the texts of the purest period to be attempted by any but professional theologians, by whom indeed they were often very imperfectly understood. Nor was much to be gathered from the profane historians of the early Christian centuries, who maintained such an obstinate silence with regard to Christianity as to give rise to the theory that they must have conspired to ignore the new religion of the lower classes as something too barbarous for ears polite<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the ruling maxim of education, especially of English education until the end of the nineteenth century, was that it was better to know one thing thoroughly than to acquire a smattering of a great many, and that a scholar was better served by an intimate knowledge of second aorists than by any wide extent of reading; while the comparative method of study was still confined to sciences of analysis like anatomy and philology<sup>2</sup>. Above all, what has been called the catastrophic view of the Christian religion was still in fashion. Although our spiritual pastors and masters were never tired of reminding us that God's ways were not as our ways, they invariably talked and wrote on the assumption that they were, and thought an Omnipotent Creator with eternity before Him must needs behave like a schoolboy in control of gunpowder for the first time. Hence "the remarkable victory" which, in the words of Gibbon, the Christian faith obtained over "the established religions

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 1893, pp. 263, 264.

<sup>2</sup> Tiele, in his Gifford Lectures delivered in 1895, remarks on the ridicule with which the learned Hellenists of his youth received the efforts of those whom they called the *comparativi*. See *Elements of the Science of Religion*, 1897, vol. I. p. 7.

of the earth" was in the view of the orthodox chiefly due to the miraculous powers placed at the disposal of the primitive Church, and it was considered impious to look further for the cause of the despotic rule which in a comparatively brief space of time it succeeded in establishing over the minds of men.\*

From this state of things, the foundation of what is known as the science of religions did much to deliver us. When non-Christian faiths, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Mohammedanism, came to be systematically studied without preconceived hostility or desire to jeer at their absurdities, it was seen that the same atmosphere of miracle and legend had gathered round their infancy as round that of the Christian Church. Outside the regular or canonical scriptures—if the phrase may be used—of all of these faiths, there had evidently grown up a vast literature of uncertain date and authorship in which the same stories were repeated and the same episodes introduced as in the Christian Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Lives of the Saints. It began to dawn upon us that, as the human mind under the same conditions generally works in the same way, it was possible that all religions, whether true or false, might have gone through the same or similar stages of development<sup>1</sup>.

That this view of the case was in itself a great step in advance, everyone will readily admit who can remember the horror with which any proposal to equate or even compare Christianity with any other religion was once received. It was much helped, however, by another novel hypothesis which about that time had got over its period of obloquy and was rapidly coming to the front, namely, the theory of evolution. When Darwin in his *Origin of Species* enunciated the truth that as more animals and plants than the earth can support come into existence every year, it is only those varieties which are best fitted to their environment which survive the

<sup>1</sup> No better proof can be given of the change in public opinion in such matters than the comparison of Gibbon's words with regard to "the miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church" (*Decline and Fall*, Bury's edition, vol. II. p. 2) and the way the subject is treated in the article "Wonders" in Cheyne's *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 1903.

consequent struggle for existence, he practically gave us a new standpoint from which to contemplate Nature. Herbert Spencer, quickly grasping this principle and carrying its application much further than Darwin had ventured to do, showed that it governed the development not only of animal forms but of the intellectual and moral faculties of man, of political and social institutions, and even of what he called "ecclesiastical institutions," which included religions themselves. With the general acceptance of this view, it followed that the success in point of popularity of any creed at any period of the world's history was not due to any sudden or capricious exercise of the Divine will, but to the normal working of a universal and irresistible law.

But, at this point, we must stop a little to define what is meant by the science of religions. Science, in this sense, has so far departed from its strict and etymological signification of knowledge, as to connote exact knowledge based upon ascertained fact, while a science is generally held to mean an organized system in which the largest possible number of related facts are gathered together with reference to one common subject of study. At first sight, it appears that nothing can be more rigidly excluded by this definition than religion, which has been defined as "the effective desire to be in right relation to the power manifesting itself in the universe<sup>1</sup>." This, which in some quarters would be called the religion "of the heart," can never form the subject of study based upon exact knowledge, because the relations between any human being and the power manifesting itself in the universe can be known only, so far as we can see, to that being and to that power. But in the science under consideration, there is no question of religion generally, but of religions, which is a very different thing. By a religion, we generally mean the assembly of beliefs, traditions, and forms of worship which go to make up a faith or cult, and this, as it must, according to the experience of all history, have come into being through the agency of some man or men, should go through the same evolutionary

<sup>1</sup> The definition is that of Ira W. Howerth, *International Journal of Ethics*, 1903, p. 205.



process as all other human institutions. Hence there is at first sight a considerable probability that all religions whatever will be found on examination to follow the same law of development by the survival of those best fitted to their environment that we have seen operative in the case of animal forms.

Here, however, the Christian—or for that matter, the adherent of any faith which claims to have been founded by a special revelation—finds himself in the presence of a dilemma. His own faith, whether it be Christianity or another, is in his eyes true, as being not the work of man, but of God, and all others are false. How therefore are they to be compared? Is the Jew, who believes the Law to have been delivered to his people “among the thunders of Sinai,” the Parsi who is taught the special inspiration of Zoroaster by the “Omniscient Lord” Ahura Mazda, or the Mohammedan who thinks that Mohammed received the Koran from Allah himself, to be told that his faith has developed according to the same laws as that of the Christian, who is convinced that his has no other source than the teaching of the Divine Founder of Christianity?

To this it may be said that the dilemma is more apparent than real, and is due to a like confusion of thought with that which seized upon many when the evolutionary theory was first promulgated. No argument was then more common than that the Divine creation of the animals, including man, was authoritatively revealed once for all in the first chapter of Genesis, and that the bare formulation of the idea that man’s bodily form had developed by a long process of evolution and selection from those of the lower animals was therefore a blasphemy that could only be uttered by atheistic men of science<sup>1</sup>. There is no occasion to go here into the tissue of sophistries and misconceptions with which Mr Gladstone, when confronted with this argument in controversy with M. Albert Réville, one of the founders of the science of religions, and with M. Réville’s champion Prof. Huxley, tried to prove that the

<sup>1</sup> See Tiele, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 5 *sqq.* The controversies raging round Darwin’s theory when first put forward are well summarized by F. W. Hutton in his *Darwinism and Lamarckism*, 1899, *passim*. Cf. Delage and Goldsmith, *Les Théories de l’Évolution*, Paris, 1909, pp. 28, 29.

assertion of the doctrine of evolution was to be found in the Book of Genesis. It is sufficient to say that Darwin never affirmed that natural selection or the survival of the fittest was the cause of the variation of animal forms, but simply that it was the mode in which that variation, however caused, operated<sup>1</sup>. In like manner, it may be said that the science of religions by no means attempts to discuss the causes which lead to the institution of any particular religion, but deals merely with the laws underlying its development when once instituted. The Christian religion, like those of Moses, Zoroaster, and Mohammed, however Divine its origin, was, like them, propagated by men who founded the Church, handed on the traditions, and gave form to the ceremonies. Is there, therefore, any reason why the same law of development should not apply to this as well as to its rivals?

That the answer to this must be in the negative is at last beginning to be generally admitted. Prof. Tiele, writing in 1897, was obliged to confess that "the new science of religions was in many quarters regarded with suspicion<sup>2</sup>," but Dr Jevons, when lecturing at Hartford in 1908, was able to say that "the time has happily gone by when the mere idea of comparing Christianity with any other religion would have been rejected with horror as treasonous and treacherous<sup>3</sup>." Yet it may be doubted whether the clouds have rolled completely away, and it is fairly certain that the many learned and able Catholic priests who have done so much to elucidate the origins and tendencies of ancient religions other than their own have until lately avoided the discussion of their relations with the earliest forms of Christianity. This is the more to be regretted, because they are in many cases peculiarly fitted for the investigation, and their acquaintance with the extra-Canonical Christian writers before Constantine, hitherto much neglected by Protestant theologians, would make their conclusions upon it especially valuable. Yet it is along these lines that future

<sup>1</sup> See Hutton, *op. cit.* p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Tiele, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion*, 1908, p. 18.

inquiry will probably advance ; and if, as most of us believe, the Christian religion has outdistanced and survived all its early competitors because it was better fitted than they to its environment, it is of great importance even from the point of view of the most rigid orthodoxy, that we should have a clear conception of what that environment was. Fortunately the gaps in our knowledge have been in great measure filled by the work of Continental scholars outside the pale of the Catholic Church, who have been indefatigable of late years in discovering documents, editing texts, and publishing monuments which throw great light on the history of the religions which at the outset competed with Christianity for the favour of the Graeco-Roman world. A summary of these labours is one of the objects aimed at in the following pages.

If, now, we attempt to examine what these competitors were, we find at the outset that a good number of those which we once thought formidable may be eliminated from the list. Judaism, for instance, although the matrix in which Christianity was formed, was never at any time in effective rivalry with it. The words of the Gospel as to the Pharisees compassing sea and land to make one proselyte have misled the unwary into supposing that the number of Jewish proselytes was at one time or another large<sup>1</sup> ; but it must be remembered that it was the Sadducees and not the Pharisees who were the dominant party in the Jewish State, and that these last formed but a very small part of the total population of Judaea<sup>2</sup>. The Sadducees from their Hellenizing tendencies were much more likely to go over to the faith of the Gentiles than to make any great effort for their conversion, and both they and the Essenes, who formed in Josephus' day the third party among the Jews,

<sup>1</sup> Like the late Dean Stanley, who in his *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, talked about the synagogue of the Jewish settlement in Rome under the first Emperors "fascinating the proud Roman nobles by the glimpse it gave of a better world" (vol. III. p. 410).

<sup>2</sup> According to Josephus (*Antiq.* XVIII. i. 3, 4) they did not amount to more than 6000 men distributed throughout the whole of Palestine. Morrison thinks that "the Pharisaic party had no attraction for the great bulk of the population," *The Jews under Roman Rule*, 1890, p. 307.

were too much set on procuring, by different means, the temporal supremacy of Israel, to care much about admitting any proselyte to share in it<sup>1</sup>. Although a few undistinguished persons of Gentile blood may have become converts to Judaism between the birth of Christ and the fall of the Temple, their number can never have been at any time important ; and after 69 A.D., the furious hostility that arose between Jew and Gentile made any further conversions to the Jewish faith practically impossible. Never, so far as we know, did Judaism aim at becoming, and certainly never had the slightest chance of appearing as, a world-religion.

Not less hopeless, in this respect, was the case of the Graeco-Roman pantheon. The late Mr Long's picture of "Diana or Christ," representing a young woman called upon by a sympathetic Roman magistrate to choose between sacrificing to the statue of the many-breasted Artemis of Ephesus and condemnation to death as a Christian, attained great popularity in its day, and shows with fair clearness the view of the relations between Paganism and early Christianity supposed at the end of the last century to have been current in the first. Yet hardly anything could give a falser idea of the religious history of the period. The officials of the Roman Empire in time of persecution sought to force the Christians to sacrifice, not to any of the heathen gods, but to the Genius of the Emperor and the Fortune of the City of Rome ; and at all times the Christians' refusal was looked upon not as a religious but as a political offence<sup>2</sup>. For the rest, the worship of the Olympian gods had, when Christianity came to the surface, almost entirely died out, and both Greek and Latin writers bear witness to the contempt with which it was regarded by both races at the beginning of our era. Cicero, while admitting that the world is governed by the providence of the gods, rejects all the myths attached to them as impious, and declares that the "Deity who is diffused in every part of Nature" appears as the earth under the name of Ceres,

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. V *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See Neander, *General Hist. of the Christian Religion and Church*, Eng. ed. 1853, vol. I. p. 126.

as the sea under that of Neptune, and so on<sup>1</sup>. Plutarch, too, is plainly a monotheist, who worships "the one eternal, passionless Spirit far removed from the world of chance and change and earthly soiture" of Greek philosophy<sup>2</sup>; and, while lamenting the decay of faith which has led to the cessation of oracles, thinks that all the manifestations of the Divine providence are the work of no great deity, but of a crowd of inferior powers or demons who are hardly in a greater superiority of position to man than the fairies of our childhood<sup>3</sup>. Whatever rivalry the Christian Church had to face in its infancy, it had none to fear from the deities of Olympus.

It has been said, however, and to a certain extent accepted, that the first efforts of Christianity were sorely hindered by the followers of the great Greek philosophers. In this there is a certain amount of truth, for the Neo-Platonic school did indeed enter into an alliance with the few remaining worshippers of the Pagan gods which forced them into an attitude of opposition to Christianity. But this was at a date some time after the compact with Constantine, and consequently later than that within the scope of this book. Nor is it likely that at an earlier date philosophy and Christianity appealed to the same class of minds, and that they thus entered into serious competition with each other. As the late Dr Hatch has said, "the earliest forms of Christianity were not only outside the sphere of Greek philosophy, but they also appealed on the one hand, mainly to the classes which philosophy did not reach, and on the other hand, to a standard which philosophy did not recognize<sup>4</sup>." Faith, not reason, was the quality that the Apostles and their immediate successors sought in their hearers, and Celsus was probably not far wrong when he said

<sup>1</sup> *De Natura Deorum*, c. xxviii. The statement is put into the mouth of Balbus whose arguments Cicero declares to have in his opinion "the greater probability." See also Athenagoras, *Legatio*, c. xxii. and Minucius Felix, c. xix. With such interpretations or mythoplasms, Philo of Alexandria was familiar. Cf. F. C. Conybeare, *Apology of Apollonius*, 1894, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 1904, p. 419.

<sup>3</sup> *De Iside et Osiride*, c. xxv.

<sup>4</sup> Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 124.

that the rule of admission into the infant Church was "Let no educated man enter, no wise man, no prudent man, for such things we deem evil; but whoever is ignorant, whoever is unintelligent, whoever is simple, let him come and be welcome<sup>1</sup>." To this state of mind the password of the early Christian communities, *Maran atha*, is a sufficient key. The confident expectation of the nearness of the Parusia or Second Advent for the primitive Christian overwhelmed all other considerations. "The Lord is at hand and His reward" was the one fact that he wished to keep before him. What need to trouble about the Highest Good or the hundred other questions that vexed the souls of the philosophers?

The religions competing with Christianity which are left after this elimination may be classed in three categories. First come the Oriental religions native to countries lying to the south and east of the Mediterranean and therefore mainly outside the sphere of Hellenic culture until after the conquests of Alexander. These religions, born or nurtured in Asia Minor, Persia, and Egypt, so soon as Alexander had carried out his project of the marriage of Europe and Asia, poured westward in a flood which a Roman satirist compared to the Orontes emptying itself into the Tiber, and gained, according to a well-known law in the history of religions, a far greater influence over the minds of men than they had exercised in their native home. The second category comprises the many strange sects which the first Fathers of the Church grouped together under the generic name of Gnostics. The faith which these professed was not, as it is sought to show later, one founded on religion at all but rather on magic, and had long been present in germ as a sort of heresy or alternative belief underlying the worship of the gods of Olympus. Finally, there arose the ambitious religion of Manes, which aimed at sweeping into one vast synthesis or eclectic church the three religions of Zoroaster, Buddha, and Christ, which at the time of its institution divided between them the allegiance of the civilized world.

Each of these categories shall be dealt with in turn; but

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *contra Celsus*, t. iii. c. 44. Cf. Hatch, where last quoted.

before doing so, it may be well to say something upon the state of our knowledge concerning them. Until lately, it was a commonplace of religious history that the Catholic Church had destroyed as far as possible all traces of the religions that she had supplanted, which was picturesquely expressed in the phrase that in her victory she had burned the enemy's camp. That this was her conscious policy may be gathered from the advice given by a Pope of the VIIIth century, to "break the idols and consecrate the temples" of the heathen<sup>1</sup>; but of late many relics of the ancient faiths which had before escaped us have been disinterred by the care of scholars. During the last century, the lost heresiology of Hippolytus and considerable fragments of works by Gnostic authors were brought to light in circumstances to be described in their place<sup>2</sup>, while the present decade has not only added to our stock of Gnostic fragments, but has revealed to us on the western frontier of China a hoard of Manichaean documents rich beyond our hopes<sup>3</sup>. These are not only valuable by reason of the information they afford, but give us ground for the belief that, as the interest in such matters becomes more widely spread, many more documents throwing light upon the subject will appear.

One word may be said in conclusion as to the relations of these rival religions between themselves. Whoever studies the documents here described cannot fail to be struck by the fact that certain ideas, phrases, and even words, seem common to them all. At the time that these documents were written this similarity excited no remark from the orthodox, as it was at once disposed of by the theory that these religions were one and all the invention of the Devil, and therefore naturally bore traces of their common origin. This explanation, however convenient, does not satisfy the demands of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 1899, p. 38, n. 4. See also the edict of Constantine quoted in the concluding chapter, *infra*. The steps which led up to the policy are well summarized by Walter Johnson, *Byways of British Archaeology*, 1912, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. VII *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> See Chap. XIII *infra*.

modern criticism, and it is therefore necessary to look further. One way of accounting for the phenomenon is to suppose that many if not all of the analogies noticed are due to the mistakes of scribes and translators, who, when dealing with expressions unfamiliar to them, were naturally inclined to repeat the same phrases over and over again. This, as all know who have had to do with ancient manuscripts, is accountable for much, and it is extremely likely that a monk of the vth or vith century transcribing an account of the opinions of, for instance, the Ophites who flourished in Phrygia before the birth of Christ at the same time with those of the Manichaeans found in Rome three centuries later, would not hesitate to express views essentially different by the same phrases and even the same words. Add to this the jumble that persons untrained in philology naturally make between names in a foreign language and those of similar sound in their own tongue, coupled with the fixed idea of finding in the traditions of the heathen a confirmation of the historical truth of the Hebrew Scriptures, and you have some explanation of the cause which makes many proper names recur unexpectedly in otherwise unrelated documents. Thus the Armenian bishop, Moses of Chorene, in narrating the story which he says he obtained from Berossus, the Chaldaean historian who wrote at the beginning of our era, says that "Before the building of the Tower of Babel and the multiplication of tongues among the human race, after the navigation of Xisuthros [*i.e.* Hasis-adra, the Babylonian Noah] in Armenia, Zervan, Titan, and Japhet were princes of the land. These persons," he adds, "seem to be Shem, Ham, and Japhet<sup>1</sup>." Zervan is the name given by a late sect of Zoroastrians to the "Boundless Time" whom they placed at the origin of all things, while Titan belongs to the Hellenic mythology, and Japhet may either be Saturn's brother Iapetus, or the patriarch of the Book of Genesis. It is to be conjectured that Berossus did not use these three names in the apposition quoted or probably at all, and we can only guess vainly at the real names which are concealed under those which Moses of Chorene here gives.

<sup>1</sup> Langlois, *Collection des Historiens de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1868, t. i. p. 388.



But when all allowance is made for mistakes like these, there remains a fund of ideas common to all or many of the religions hereafter treated of, which cannot be explained away by any theory of verbal inaccuracy<sup>1</sup>. As an instance of this, let us take the notion of an archetypal or heavenly man created ages before the appearance upon earth of terrestrial man, who was nevertheless made in the image and after the likeness of his predecessor. This idea, as will be shown later, is met with among the Phrygian Ophites, where "a Man and a Son of Man" were said to be the origin of all subsequent things, as in the Avestic literature of Persia where Gayômort, the son, according to one story, of the Supreme God Ahura Mazda by his daughter Spenta-armaiti, is made at once the pattern and the source of the whole human race. The borrowings of Zoroastrianism from Babylonia were not few, and we might conceive this to be the survival of some old Babylonian tradition, such as that which modern critics believe to have been the origin of the Creation and Flood stories of Genesis; and this theory is strengthened by the predominant part which this "First Man" plays in Manichaeism, itself a Babylonian faith, where the Turkestan MSS. show him as a sort of intermediary between the gods of light and this earth. But how shall we account for the fact that in one of the earliest documents of the *Pistis Sophia*, the collection of Gnostic writings hereafter described<sup>2</sup>, a great angel named Jēû, who is spoken of many times as the "overseer of the light" and the arranger of the Cosmos, is also alluded to as the "First Man," in a way which shows that the writer did not doubt that the allusion would be comprehended by his readers without further explanation<sup>3</sup>? The

<sup>1</sup> The late Dr Salmon's theory that writers like Hippolytus may have been taken in by a forger who made one document do duty for many different sects is given in Chap. VII *infra*, but the arguments in its favour are not conclusive.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. X *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Gaston Maspero, "Sur l'Ennéade," *R.H.R.* Jan.-Fev. 1892, p. 8, says that the Egyptians regarded Osiris as the First Man, and Jéquier repeats the statement in his *Livre de ce qu'il y a dans l'Hadès*, Paris, 1894, pp. 9-10. Yet there seems no evidence that the Egyptians ever knew him under that name.

*Pistis Sophia*, although doubtless written in Greek in the first instance, comes to us in a Coptic dress, and the documents therein contained show more affinities with the Egyptian than with the Persian religion. How therefore can we account for the same idea appearing at almost the same time in countries between the peoples of which there was always bitter hostility, and which were separated moreover by the Arabian Desert and the whole breadth of Asia Minor?

It seems to the present writer that no solution of this and of the numerous other difficulties of which this is but one example can be profitably suggested, until we know more than we do at present about the origin and dates of Zoroastrianism. Although this religion is still with us in the beliefs of the modern Parsis, there is none about the origin of which we know less, or concerning the antiquity of which there is greater discrepancy between ancient and modern writers. Thus, while Plutarch, quoting as is generally supposed Theopompos of Chios who flourished in the IVth century B.C., declares that Zoroaster himself wrote 5000 years before the Trojan War<sup>1</sup>, modern writers of authority, like Prof. Williams Jackson and Mdlle Menant, are inclined to bring down the date of the eponymous prophet or reformer of the Persian religion to 700 B.C.<sup>2</sup> The discrepancy is too great to be bridged over by any compromise, and the question has been further complicated by the discovery a few years ago of inscriptions which show that Mithras, the Persian god whose worship formed the most dangerous rival to that of the Christian Church immediately before its alliance with Constantine, was one of the most exalted deities of the presumably Aryan Hittites or Mitannians at a date not later than 1272 B.C.<sup>3</sup> Signs are

<sup>1</sup> *De Is. et Os. c. XLVI.*

<sup>2</sup> See (Mdlle) D. Menant, "Parsis et Parsisme," *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, 1904, and Prof. Williams Jackson as there quoted. The same date is accepted with some hesitation by Prof. Hope Moulton in his *Early Zoroastrianism* (Hibbert Lectures), 1913, pp. 17 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> See H. G. Jacobi, "The Antiquity of Vedic Culture," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1909, pp. 720 *sqq.*, where the texts relied upon are given and discussed. The correspondence which followed upon this paper (see *J.R.A.S.* 1909, 1910) is full of interest. Fossey, "Les Fouilles

not wanting that discovery in the near future may take this line of advance, and if it should turn out that the religion which Zoroaster reformed was established in Northern Mesopotamia before the Homeric age, we may have to reconstruct all our ideas of the origin of the Greek religion. There seems no use therefore in dilating upon hypotheses which the course of research may in a very few years prove to be entirely erroneous<sup>1</sup>.

In the meantime, the thing of immediate importance seems to be to get the documentary evidence already at our disposal as far as possible before the public, and this is attempted in the pages which follow. The different religions are there arranged in the chronological order of their greatest activity in the West with the belief that this course will prove most convenient to the reader.

Allemandes à Boghaz-Keui," *Journal des Savans*, July, 1909, p. 316, would make the date of the inscription about 1900 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> After this was in print, there came to hand Mr Stephen Langdon's translation of the Sumerian tablet from Nippur found by him at Philadelphia, which narrates in a new and modified form the earliest Babylonian legend of the Creation. From this it appears that the goddess Nin-harsag, either on her own account or as the agent of the god En-ki or Ea, "created two creatures with heads, feet, and face as a model for mankind." See Mr Langdon's Preliminary Note in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1914, p. 196, n. 23. A full transliteration and translation is promised later in the *P.S.B.A.* If Mr Langdon's reading of the tablet is accepted, this may well prove to be the origin of all the "First Man" legends mentioned on p. lxi, *supra*.



## CHAPTER I

### THE CONQUESTS OF ALEXANDER

A GLANCE at the map of Asia at the coming of Alexander will convince us that all but a corner of the world known to the ancients was then ruled by a single power. The Persian Empire, sprawling like a huge octopus over the centre of the continent, dominated it from its four capitals at the head of the Persian Gulf, and stretched without a break from the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean. In its eastern provinces were comprised what is now Russian Turkestan from Krasnovodsk to Kashgar, with the Khanates and the Pamirs, all Afghanistan, Seistan, Baluchistan, the North-West Province, and part of the Punjab. On the western side of the Great Central Desert came the countries which we now call Persia and Turkey in Asia containing in themselves a territory half the size of the Continent of Europe, together with the rich province to the south of the Caucasus which has lately passed into the grip of Russia. From here one long tentacle had stretched across the Sinaitic Peninsula and had seized Egypt; and, although another had shrunk back hurt from its attack on Greece, it yet held positions on the Bosphorus and the Hellespont which formed a standing menace that the raid might be repeated. Apart from the Greek States which, as has been well said, the Great King found easier to control through their own venal orators than to conquer by his soldiers, there remained outside his sway only the trading republic of Carthage and the Italian cities just rising into prominence. Travellers' tales, more than usually improbable and untrustworthy, were, indeed, told of great countries swarming with men and fabulous monsters lying beyond the African and Indian deserts on the

southern, and the great ranges of mountains on the eastern, frontier of the Empire<sup>1</sup>; but these gave as little concern to its rulers as did the fringe of barbarian tribes, Cimmerians, Hyperboreans, Gauls, and Scyths, who filled up the space between the civilized world and the imaginary ring of waters which was called the Outer Ocean.

That this vast dominion should be loosely compacted was of the nature of things. The twenty or more provinces into which it was divided enjoyed a large measure of self-government, and had preserved, for the most part, their native laws and customs unaltered. Each of these divisions was ruled by a satrap who, like a Chinese viceroy, was allowed to maintain armies and even fleets of his own. But a check, imperfect no doubt but still existent, was exercised over his proceedings by the presence of a Royal Secretary in each satrapy, whose business it was to supervise the accounts, and to send up regular reports to the capital of the doings, of his coadjutor<sup>2</sup>, while the troops were under the command of a general appointed directly by the Crown. From time to time, also, a Royal Commissioner called the King's Eye visited the province with a strong guard to hear complaints and to see that all was in order<sup>3</sup>. The satrap, too, only held his post during his master's pleasure, and was liable at any moment to be removed to another province, degraded, or put to death, on the strength of a simple letter bearing the Royal Seal; and the tribute which each satrapy had to pay to the Great King being settled at a fixed and known amount, there was less chance than under some similar systems of devolution that the satrap might squeeze out of his subjects a sum

<sup>1</sup> Such as the Arimaspi or one-eyed inhabitants of Russia, about whom Herodotus (Bk III. c. 116) quotes the legend that they stole gold from its griffin guardians, and those *myrmeces* or great ants whom Megasthenes (Strabo, Bk xv. c. 1, § 44) and other writers describe as digging for gold on the Thibetan frontier—a story of which more than one rationalistic explanation has been suggested.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson's *Herodotus* (1862 edition), II. p. 462 for authorities.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, Paris, 1904, p. 706. Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 463, thinks this practice lapsed early, but Xenophon seems clear that it was in force in his time (*Cyropaedia*, Bk VIII. c. 6).

far greater than that which he transmitted to the Treasury<sup>1</sup>. Above all, the Persians were of Aryan stock, and early showed signs of the talent for governing older races which seems to have stuck to the Aryans throughout their history. They made excellent roads, and established swift running posts that did much to make communication easy between the most important parts of their empire; while, as the satraps' standing armies were composed either of native Persians or hired mercenaries, the subject populations had an opportunity, rare enough in the ancient world, of peacefully developing their internal resources without constant fear of disturbance by foreign enemies, or forced participation in wars of aggression<sup>2</sup>. It was only when the word went forth from Babylon or Susa, Ecbatana or Persepolis, for the calling-out of the Ban of the whole Empire that the other than Persian subject of Artaxerxes or Darius had to join the levy of his satrapy, and, on orders given to him through an interpreter, to assist the Great King in crushing some rebellious satrap or repelling foreign invasion. At other times, he must have known him only as a kind of divinity, having power to throw down and to set up, to whom he might cry, not always in vain, against the oppression of his own immediate ruler. Those writers are no doubt justified who say that the government of the Persian Empire was to the humbler classes of Asiatics a great improvement upon any that had preceded it<sup>3</sup>, and that the rule of the Great King never awoke the fierce resentment in its subjects aroused by the tyranny of the Semitic Assyrians, or of the Chaldeans who were, in great part, of Mongoloid blood<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> He was probably allowed a reasonable sum for the maintenance of his court and government; but if he exceeded this, was liable to severe punishment. This appears from the execution by Alexander, on his return from India, of the satraps who had been guilty of extortion. He seems to have purposely preserved the Persian laws and customs on this point unaltered.

<sup>2</sup> This is the opinion of Rawlinson, *op. cit.* pp. 460 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 464; Winwood Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, 1910, p. 56; Sayce, *Ancient Empires of the East*, 1884, pp. 250, 251; Maspero, *op. cit.* p. 721.

<sup>4</sup> Oppert, *Le Peuple et la Langue des Mèdes*, Paris, pp. 17 *sqq.*; Maspero, *op. cit.* p. 559, n. 11.

It was doubtless the memory of this golden age, glorified as remembrances generally are by the lapse of centuries, that brought about the reaction to the Persian form of government and culture which we shall have to discuss later in the countries bled white by the Roman proconsuls.

Throughout this vast realm, Alexander's coming brought about a change such as the civilized world has never seen before or since. Among the world-conquerors who have been hailed as heroes in after times, Alexander—surely the greatest individual known to history—stands distinguished by the loftiness of his aims and the swiftness with which they were attained. It is wonderful that a boy of twenty with an army that cannot have exceeded 50,000 men all told should succeed in overcoming practically the whole of Asia in less time than it took the British Empire with the third of a million to break down the armed resistance of a few thousand Boers. More wonderful is it that he should a little later contrive to transport a force of about 100,000, comprising infantry, cavalry and artillery, over the three thousand miles that separate Macedonia from Karachi, at the same time preserving such perfect communication with his base that he seems never to have remained for long without letters from Europe, while the stream of recruits that reached him from the same source must have been continuous and unchecked<sup>1</sup>. Such a feat which, with all the aid which steam and electricity can give us, would still tax to the utmost the powers of our greatest modern generals, becomes almost miraculous when we think that the greater part of his line of communications must have lain through recently subjugated lands, and that his own

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Holdich, in his excellent book *The Gates of India* (p. 104), says that when he defeated the Aspasiens or Yusufzai in the Kuner Valley he sent the pick of their cattle back to Macedonia to improve the native breed. Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk iv. c. 25, however, in quoting the story from Ptolemy, says only that Alexander "wished to send them" to till the soil. It seems impossible that they could have survived the journey before the days of steamships. Still more incredible is the story in Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. L. that when Alexander was at Prophthasia (probably Farrah in Seistan), he received some grapes grown on the coast of Greece. But such stories, although coloured by age, may serve to show how perfect his communications were always thought to have been.



advance led him into countries unmapped and known only to him by the half fabulous tales of his enemies<sup>1</sup>. But the most astonishing thing about these exploits is that they were all performed with the conscious aim of making Asia Greek<sup>2</sup>, and in this respect, as in all others, they were both original and successful. Everywhere that Alexander passed, he left behind him cities peopled by a mixture of his own veterans, of those camp followers which, then as now, have always stuck to a European army on the march, and of natives of the country either found on the spot or drawn from some other part of Asia; and the permanence of these foundations still bears witness to the foreseeing eye of their founder. Alexandria in Egypt, Candahar, Secunderabad, all preserve to this day the memory of his royal name, and the continued importance of Khojend, Samarcand, Herat, Merv, and Cabul out of the many other Alexandrias that he established on his conquering way show that his statesmanlike perception of the chief markets of the East was as sure as his strategical insight<sup>3</sup>. Nor did he neglect other means of carrying out the great design that he had at heart. In the great feast at Susa, which he celebrated on his return from India, the "marriage of Europe and Asia," which had always formed his guiding idea, took visible shape. He had already wedded—it is said for love—the beautiful Roxana, a princess from Bactria in the Eastern (or Upper) Provinces

<sup>1</sup> Holdich, *op. cit. passim*, says that he must have had information from Persian sources, and that his route must have been laid beforehand. Sir Thomas' opinion, as that of a soldier as well as a student, is entitled to much respect. Yet the instances of Genghiz Khan and other Oriental invaders are perhaps against any such necessity.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, *Historical Essays*, 1873, second series, pp. 192, 193.

<sup>3</sup> Khojend was probably Alexandria *eschata* or the furthest (East). Samarcand, of which the ancient name was Maracanda, is said by Baber to be a foundation of Alexander's. Herat was Alexandria Ariana, and Merv probably Alexandria Margiana, while Cabul seems to have been Ortospana. Among the other Alexandrias which have retained their old importance are Alexandria Arachosiana or Candahar, Alexandria Caucasiana or Begram, and Alexandria Sogdiana or Hyderabad. See J. W. McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, 1896, pp. 36 *sqq.*, and Droysen, *Histoire de l'Hellénisme*, (French edition), Paris, 1883, I. pp. 408 *sqq.*

of his new Empire<sup>1</sup>, and now he took as a second consort Statira, the daughter of Darius, who, as the scion of the last native king of Persia, may be taken as the representative of its western centre. Nearly a hundred of his superior officers and some ten thousand of his humbler followers hastened to follow his example and to receive Asiatic brides with the rich dowries assigned them by the Conqueror<sup>2</sup>. Moreover the thirty thousand youthful recruits from his new conquests, whom he had ordered five years before to be trained in the Macedonian discipline and the Greek language, now arrived<sup>3</sup>, and Alexander set to work with his usual energy to diffuse through his European army strong drafts of his Asiatic subjects in order to cement still further the alliance between the two Continents. Had he lived, it would have been a mixed army of Asiatics and Europeans that he would have led the following year to the conquest of the western world<sup>4</sup>.

Destiny, however, is, as men would have said in those days, stronger than the immortal gods, and Alexander's early death put an instant stop to all ideas of further conquest. It is idle, until we know the causes of things, to speculate on what might have been ; but it seems probable that if Nearchus' expedition had sailed, the Conqueror's warlike plans would once again have proved to have been perfectly laid, that he would have crushed Carthage as easily as Thebes and Tyre, and that the Italian States would have received the same master as the Bactrians and Indians<sup>5</sup>. Yet so far as our immediate purpose is concerned, Alexander's work was done once for all, and the policy typified

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* p. 481.

<sup>2</sup> See last note. The second marriage is dramatically described by Droysen, *op. cit.* I. pp. 638, 639. Cf. Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk VII. c. 4 ; Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. LXX.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 6 ; Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. LXXI. Cf. Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. 646.

<sup>4</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. 660. It was probably the fear of this mixture that caused the quarrel between him and his Macedonians at Opis. See Arrian, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 8 ; Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. LXXI.

<sup>5</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* II. p. 34. Mahaffy, *Alexander's Empire*, 1887, p. 38, thinks that the Romans could never have withstood Alexander's cavalry and siege artillery, although he notes that Livy patriotically decided otherwise.

as the marriage of Europe and Asia was perhaps as well served by his death as by his life. During Persian times, the Court of the Great King had always proved a magnet drawing to itself with irresistible force the ever-restless Greeks, and the road to Susa was trodden in turn by politicians like Alcibiades, leaders of mercenaries like Xenophon, and Greek philosophers, artists, and courtezans innumerable. The traffic in mercenaries alone must have been enormous when we find Greek troops forming the stiffening of those huge armies of Darius which Alexander overthrew at the Granicus, Issus, and Arbela<sup>1</sup>; while as for the other sex, Themistocles, when turning his back on his own country, could find no better or safer mode of approaching the Persian Court than in a closed litter supposed to be conveying a Greek woman to the harem of the Great King<sup>2</sup>. But when the century-long wars for the succession to Alexander broke out upon his death, there straightway appeared five courts where before there had been but one, and these were now ruled over by Greek and not by Persian kings. Mercenaries of all kinds were in urgent demand in every one of them, while the setting free of the millions in bullion and specie found by Alexander in the Persian capitals caused an outbreak of luxury like that which followed in Germany the payment of the French milliards. Soon every Greek who had strength, beauty, or talents to sell was on foot to seek his or her fortune in Asia, and with them went everywhere the petty Greek trader, as enterprising and as fearless in pursuit of gain as those countrymen of his whose booths Lord Kitchener saw set up on the field of Omdurman before the rout of the Mahdists was complete, and whose *locandas* still greet one in the smallest villages on the Nile. The stream of fortune-hunters, now in full flood, quickly overflowed from the ancient capitals to the numerous Antigonias, Antiochias, Lysimachias, Nicomedias, and Seleucias which the new kings everywhere founded in imitation of their dead master, and even the most distant provinces began to receive their

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I, pp. 186, 240, 333. There were 30,000 Greek mercenaries fighting on the side of Darius at Issus, and 4000 of these remained faithful till his death. *Ibid.* I. p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Themistocles*, c. xxvi.

quota of Greek citizens and Greek culture. As has happened more than once in history, Asia woke suddenly from her sleep, and acquired a veneer of foreign manners in hardly longer time than it has taken Japan in our own days to adopt European armaments, teaching and dress. When the Parthians overcame Crassus, the Roman captives found the barbarian victors amusing themselves with the plays of Euripides<sup>1</sup>; while the Bactrian and Indian provinces, which the rise of the Parthian power cut off from the western part of Alexander's Empire, conceived such a taste for Greek art that the statues of Buddha with which their capitals were afterwards decorated were carved according to Greek instead of Hindu canons<sup>2</sup>. The so-called Indo-Greek kings of these parts, the Euthyдеми, Diodoti, and Eucratidae, of whom we know hardly more than the names, no more thought of using other than Greek designs and inscriptions for their coins than did the rulers of Pergamum or Antioch<sup>3</sup>. The generation that had seen Alexander face to face was hardly in its grave before the marriage of Europe and Asia had become a very real and pregnant fact.

The importance of this for the history of religions can hardly be exaggerated. Greek was spoken everywhere throughout Asia, and for the first time in the world's history the inhabitants of the civilized part of the earth had a common tongue in which they could communicate their ideas to each other. No doubt the language spoken by the offspring of

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Crassus*, c. xxxiii. The play acted was the *Bacchae*, and a Greek tragic actor, one Jason of Tralles, had been imported for the principal part. In the essay *De Alex. fortitudine*, i. c. 5, Plutarch says that no sooner had Alexander subdued Asia than Homer became a favourite reading-book, and Persian, Susianan, and Gedrosian boys learned to chant the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides.

<sup>2</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 244, 255.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvain Lévi, "Bouddhisme et les Grecs," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1891, p. 2; Percy Gardner, *Catalogue of Bactrian and Indian Coins in British Museum*. Arts other than the plastic also received attention. Amittrochates, son of the famous Chandragupta or Sandracottus, wrote to Antiochus (Soter?) to buy him some sweet wine, dried figs, and a sophist. He received the other commodities, but was told that it was not lawful to sell sophists in Greece. See Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, Bk xiv. c. 67 quoting Hegesander.

Greek colonists and their native spouses was not the tongue of Sophocles or of Demosthenes any more than it was "the strong-winged music of Homer"; but it was a better medium for the transmission of metaphysical theories than the founder of any world-religion has ever had at his disposal before or since. The missionaries whom modern nations send into the distant parts of the earth for the propagation of the Christian faith find one of their worst difficulties in the impossibility of rendering its doctrines into the languages of peoples at another stage of culture from themselves; but no such barrier between teacher and taught existed in the empire created by Alexander's genius. The result of this possibility of intercommunication of ideas was at once apparent. Anxious to show that they too had a pedigree, the older nations of the world seized the opportunity to inform their new masters of their own history and traditions; and, as all history was in those days sacred history, they thus introduced to the Greeks their gods and their beliefs as to the divine governance of the world. The sacred books of the Chaldeans, of the Egyptians, of the Jews, and no doubt of many other peoples whose records are now lost to us, were translated into Greek; and thus the science of the history of religions was born. Writers like Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch are still our chief guides for the religions of the earliest populated parts of the ancient world; but how could these compilers have handed down to us the traditions they have preserved save for writers like Berossus, Manetho, and Philo of Byblus, who themselves wrote in Greek? Plutarch tells us that when he spent a year in Rome during the reign of Trajan, he did not find it necessary to learn Latin, his native tongue being apparently understood by everybody. One may wonder how much of the sayings and doings of the Founder of Christianity would have come down to us, had they not been first recorded in the *κοινή* or *lingua franca* of the whole East<sup>1</sup>.

There were, however, other ways in which Alexander's conquests prepared the way for a religion which could make appeal

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* III. p. 66. Cf. the *Omnis Oriens loquitur* of St Jerome *Prol. ad Epist. ad Galatas*; and Deissmann, *New Light on the New Testament* (English edition), 1907, p. 30.

to men of every nation and language. Nothing is more difficult for those brought up in a monotheistic faith, with its inbred contempt for the worshippers of many gods, than to realize how the ancients regarded the Divine. The peoples of classical antiquity seem to have everywhere believed in the gods of their neighbours as absolutely as they did in their own, for they imagined that their deities had, like men, only a limited sphere of action, or, to put it scientifically, were subject to the same conditions of space as their worshippers. Thus, the Syrians thought that Yahweh of Israel was a mountain god, who could not help his people when fighting in the plains<sup>1</sup>, and the Philistines believed that the ark in which he lived would bring prosperity or disaster to the place in which it happened to be for the time being<sup>2</sup>. This is almost an exact parallel to the tale of the prince of Bactria, whose daughter was freed from demoniacal possession by an image of the Egyptian god Khonsu sent into Asia *ad hoc*, whereupon he decided that it would be wise to keep so powerful a god in his own country, and did so until frightened by a dream into sending the statue back<sup>3</sup>. But such ideas, however natural they may be to isolated or backward peoples, soon lost their hold upon the acute and logical Greeks, when they came into contact with civilized nations having pantheons differing widely from their own. The philosophers, indeed, by dint of hard reasoning on the subject, had formed before the time of Alexander a conception of the Supreme Being which does not differ materially from that of the educated Christian of the present day. "Loyal," says Pater, "to the ancient beliefs, the ancient usages, of the religions of many gods which he had found all around him, Socrates pierces through it to one unmistakable Person, of perfect intelligence, power, and goodness who takes note of him"<sup>4</sup>; and the same thing might be said with even greater certainty of the deductions of Aristotle<sup>5</sup>, whose declared

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xx. 23.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. iv. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, "La Fille du Prince de Bakhtan" in *Contes Populaires de l'Ancienne Égypte*, Paris, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, 1901, pp. 85, 86.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Bk XI. c. 6.

monotheism caused him to be adopted in the Middle Ages as one of the Doctors of the Church. But there is no reason to believe that such lofty conceptions ever influenced in the slightest the beliefs of the common people, who alone count for anything in the evolution of the organized body of beliefs and practices which we call a religion. Socrates so successfully concealed his opinions in this respect from everybody but Plato, that the clear and practical mind of Xenophon seems to have never seen in him anything but a polytheist<sup>1</sup>: and that Aristotle's monotheistic teachings were not intended for the common herd may be judged from the correspondence, whether actual or imaginary, between him and Alexander himself, in which the hero reproaches his former tutor for having published doctrines which should only be taught by word of mouth, and learns in reply that his metaphysical theories would be unintelligible save to those whom he had himself instructed in philosophy<sup>2</sup>.

It is evident, therefore, that the great mass of Alexander's subjects, whether Asiatics, Egyptians or Greeks, would require something more than the sublime theorizing of the philosophers before their religious ideas could be turned in the direction of monotheism. Nine hundred years before, Amenhotep IV of Egypt had indeed been led by his adoration of the material sun to put forward a religious reform which had as its principal feature the proclaiming abroad that there was only one God, in whose sight all mankind was equal; but the sole effect of this premature attempt to elevate the religion of his people was the loss of the external possessions of Egypt, and the post-humous branding of his own memory as that of a criminal. Possibly, too, the Hebrew Psalmists and Prophets had formed a like conception of the Deity when they asserted that among the gods there was none like unto Yahweh<sup>3</sup>; but that this

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Bk I. c. 1, § 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. vii.

<sup>3</sup> So F. H. Woods, *The Hope of Israel*, Edinburgh, 1896, p. 205, where he speaks of the religion of the Prophets and Psalmists, as "giving, on the whole, by far the most perfect and, as compared with other ancient literature, practically a unique example of monotheism." Yet as Winwood

idea seldom penetrated to their hearers is plain from their incessant denunciation of these last for "whoring after" other gods. The mere announcement of the unity of God had therefore in itself an insufficient attraction for the masses, and for the doctrine to be popular they had to be led to it by other ways than those of argument or authority. Now Aristotle noted with his usual shrewdness of observation that the form of religion in a state generally follows with fair closeness that of its temporal government<sup>1</sup>, so that men will be more inclined to believe in what the Greeks called "monarchy," or the active rule of One First Cause, if they live under a despot or absolute king than if they are members of a democracy. But when did the world either before or after his time see such a beneficent and godlike despot as Alexander? The robber-kings of Assyria had been accustomed to sweep across Western Asia leaving behind them, as they boasted in their inscriptions, a trail of vassal rulers impaled or flayed alive, of burnt cities, and of plundered peoples. The Persians, as has been said, had more idea of the rights of their inferiors, and did not regard their subject territories as mere fields for exploitation; but the life of sensual luxury into which their kings sooner or later subsided had its natural outcome in harem intrigues and assassinations which deprived the central power of a great part of its otherwise effective control over its satraps. But Alexander was in this, as in all other respects, the perfect type of the benevolent master who thinks more of his servants' welfare than of his own personal gratification. Neither his mother Olympias, domineering and masterful as she was, nor his first mistress Barsine the widow of Memnon, nor his wife Roxana of whom he is said to have been enamoured, nor the Persian princess Statira to whom he gave his hand out of policy, could boast that they ever influenced by one hairsbreadth the direction of his sovereign will. As for his justice, the swift

Reade points out, Solomon must have thought there were other gods than Yahweh, because he worshipped other gods; *op. cit. supra*, p. 201.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Politica*, Bk i. c. 2, § 7. Cf. Max Müller, *Religions of India* (Hibbert Lectures), 1880, p. 292.



punishment that he measured out on his return from India to those of his officers whom he found guilty of oppression and malversation showed that under his far-seeing eye there would be none of those abuses of delegated power from which the satrapial system had suffered under his predecessors<sup>1</sup>. Modern historians have sometimes called him cruel; but in political matters severity is often the truest mercy, and the blood that he shed at Thebes and in Bactria probably saved a hundred times the number of lives which unchecked rebellion would have made it necessary to sacrifice; while the accidental and unpremeditated death of Clitus may well be pardoned to one who found not only his dignity as man but his royal authority wantonly outraged by a friend whom he had distinguished by exceptional marks of kindness. In every other respect his record is stainless. Although opposed at every step of his short career by orators and demagogues who saw in him the only obstacle to their unrestrained plunder of the fatherland, no legend has survived to his dishonour. On the contrary, all that we hear of him shows us for the first time in the world's history a conqueror who was at the same time a just and wise ruler, merciful to his fallen foe, scorning even in war to take mean advantage<sup>2</sup>, and chivalrous to the weak to a degree that his age could neither understand nor imitate<sup>3</sup>. And with all this, he united in his own person those superficial advantages which have always been quick to win for their possessor the devotion of the mob. To a talent for generalship which neither Hannibal, Caesar, nor any modern general has equalled, he joined a personal bravery which often reached the level of recklessness and was always to be found in the forefront of the hottest battle. Whether we see him charging at the head of the Companion cavalry in the three great battles with Darius, pursuing with a handful of his guard the routed Persian army after Arbela, or first over the wall at Mooltan, Alexander is

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See his repudiation of the night attack advised at Arbela: οὐ κλέπτω τὴν νίκην, "I steal no victory!" Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. XXXI.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *op. cit.* c. XXI. and c. XXX.

always performing these feats of hardihood which in a leader strike more than anything the imagination of his soldiers. Add to this a generosity which made him willing to strip himself of his possessions to enrich his friends, a personal delight in that pomp and pageantry which forms the most direct road to the hearts of the proletariat, and a form, face and figure so distinguished that their one defect was for centuries after imitated by all who wished to be thought models of manly beauty<sup>1</sup>, and we can no longer wonder that his contemporaries looked upon him as more than human. This wise and provident ruler of the world that he had conquered was at the same time a youth beautiful as Apollo, chivalrous as Bayard, clean as Galahad. Is it surprising that his name alone of all the conquerors of the East has endured through all changes of creed and culture, that the fierce chiefs of the Central Asian tableland still boast of him as their progenitor, and that the whole Mahommedan world still hold him the king of the believing Genii? No Caesar, Attila, or Genghiz Khan has ever thus impressed the imagination of future ages<sup>2</sup>.

Thus Alexander's coming gave an enormous impulse to that monarchical principle of government which from his time onward was to reign supreme for nearly two thousand years. Philosophers and sophists hastened to declare that democracy—as was indeed the fact—had proved itself incapable of governing, and that in the rule of one man was to be found the natural order of things and the only security for a well-ordered State<sup>3</sup>. Every one of the Diadochi or Successors of Alexander

<sup>1</sup> The wry neck or, in Mr Hogarth's words, "the famous inclination of his beautiful head towards the left shoulder" was imitated by dandies as late as the time of Severus. For authorities see Hogarth, *Philip and Alexander of Macedon*, 1897, p. 278, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* i. p. 218 and p. 479, n. 1. Major P. H. Sykes lately found an inscription in Khorassan to Sulayman Shah who reigned from 1667-1694 A.D., containing the words "His audience-chamber is the Sun; his Army the Stars; his authority is like Alexander's," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1910, pp. 1152, 1153.

<sup>3</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *Hist. des Lagides*, Paris, t. i. p. 130, n. 2, points out that there was hardly a philosopher during the next three centuries who did not write a treatise *Περὶ τῆς βασιλείας*.

hurried in turn to assume the diadem, and Rome had no sooner contrived to crush her rival republic of Carthage than she too fell under the sway, first of dictators whose power was admittedly despotic, and then of emperors whose constitutional limitations were about the same as those of Alexander. That this was certain in time to react upon the universal conception of the Divine, followed directly from the law underlying religious phenomena which had been enunciated by Aristotle: but, before this could make way among the Greeks, thus suddenly promoted to the position of the ruling race, it was necessary that their own gods should be assimilated to those of their eastern fellow-subjects, or in other words, should be shown to be the same divinities under different names. Now, a movement with this object, even before Alexander's coming, had been set on foot in Greece itself, and was in fact the natural outcome of the ideas as to the origin and governance of the universe brought there by the philosophers of Ionia<sup>1</sup>. It was all very well for the masses—then as now, much given to pragmatism or the reduction of every abstract idea to its most material and practical expression—to believe that the power of every god was limited to an area of so many square feet surrounding his image or sanctuary; but how could such a notion be held by philosophers who had sought out the causes of things, by travellers who had visited neighbouring countries in pursuit of knowledge, or by soldiers who had fought there, and had found it necessary to pay reverence to gods other than their own? It is said that in naturalistic religions like those of Greece, there is always a tendency to consider as identical divinities with the same or like characteristics—to consider for instance all gods with solar attributes as but different forms of the sun-god—and the Greeks of the fourth century B.C. had thus taken many foreign gods into their pantheon. It was, as Socrates found out to his cost, an offence to bring the worship of new gods into the city; but the difficulty was got

<sup>1</sup> A parallel movement seems to have taken place in Babylonia, where all the gods were at one period identified with Marduk or Merodach. See Pinches, "Religious Ideas of the Babylonians," *Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 1893, p. 10.

over by the theory that the foreign divinity was only another form of some god already worshipped by the citizens<sup>1</sup>, and by keeping his cult as private as possible. Later, when the popularity of the new deity seemed to be assured, an oracle of Delphi was generally secured authorizing the adoption of his worship under the name of his nearest Greek analogue, and in this way many foreign worships were brought into Athens itself<sup>2</sup>. Bendis, the moon-goddess of Thrace, had there from early times a temple or Bendideion<sup>3</sup>, and the Syrian Adonis was publicly wailed for in the city when Alcibiades was setting out for Sicily<sup>4</sup>. This, too, was the more natural because the Greeks always acknowledged that their older divinities originally came to them from foreign parts. The myths in which the traditions of their origins were preserved gave Crete or Asia Minor as the birthplace of Zeus, an island in the Aegean as that of Apollo and Artemis, and the whole scene of the earthly trials of Demeter and Persephone was laid partly in Eleusis and partly in Asia<sup>5</sup>. As for Africa, Herodotus boldly asserts that the "names" of almost all the gods worshipped by the Greeks came from Egypt<sup>6</sup>, and, although this is certainly not literally true, it gave him an excuse for identifying all the Egyptian deities of whom he had any knowledge with the Greek divinities whom he thought they resembled. But when Alexander's conquests had made the different subject nations really acquainted with each other's religion, the process of *theocrasia* or the fusion of one god with another received an impulse that carried it beyond all bounds<sup>7</sup>. The divinities of Asia Minor were naturally the first to be taken into the Greek pantheon, especially by the Athenians, always mindful of their Ionian

<sup>1</sup> Maury, *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, Paris, 1857, III. p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Demosthenes, v. *Midias*, p. 53; Herodotus, Bk VII. c. 189. Such gods were called by the peculiar epithet of *πυθόχρηστοι*. See inscription from Smyrna quoted by Rayet, *Revue Archéologique*, 1877, pp. 115-128.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk II. c. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, c. CXVIII. Cf. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, ll. 387 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, Bk II. c. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. 698.

kinship; and the many-breasted goddess of Ephesus, Cybele of Pessinus with her consort Atys or Attis, and the Sidonian Astarte, were all worshipped in Greece after identification with different Greek deities in the manner that had served to naturalize the "Thracian" or Thessalian Dionysos, and the (probably) Egyptian Hermes<sup>1</sup>. As we shall see later, the Phrygian Sabazius and the Cretan Zagreus had already preceded them in secret, and Persian, Jewish, and perhaps Indian gods were to follow. From Greece, the passion for *theocrasia* spread both eastward and westward. The Greek kings of Upper India found it necessary to identify on their monuments the gods of their native subjects with the divinities of Homer<sup>2</sup>, and those of the Central Provinces and of Asia Minor did the same with such effect that it is almost impossible for us to distinguish their many Artemises, Aphrodites, and different forms of Zeus from the gods worshipped under similar names in ancient Greece<sup>3</sup>. As for the West, the Romans, even before they became the masters of the world, took over the Greek pantheon *en bloc* by the simple process of calling their own Italian deities by Greek names; and if we still speak of Zeus as Jupiter, Athena as Minerva, Ares as Mars, and Hermes as Mercury, it is by reason of the syncretism brought into fashion by Alexander's conquests.

Neither must we forget that the deification of Alexander during his lifetime brought an entirely new conception of the Divine into the European world. The divinization of the king was indeed no new thing in Egypt, where the Pharaoh from

<sup>1</sup> See Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, t. III. cc. 15, 16. Aristophanes, *Horæ* fragment 1 of Didot, and *Aves*, l. 874, is practically the earliest witness for their introduction into Athens. Cf. the Scholiast upon the last passage quoted, for their identification with Greek deities. M. Paul Foucart, *Les Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs*, Paris, 1873, pp. 57 and 85, shows the great rush of foreign gods into Attica after the Persian War and the mode in which their worship was propagated.

<sup>2</sup> Percy Gardner, *Catalogue of Coins*, etc., *passim*. Goblet d'Alviella, *Ce que l'Inde doit à la Grèce*, Paris, 1897, p. 73, notes that these coins reproduce "the usual type of the classical divinities Hercules, Dionysos, Poseidon, Helios, Pallas, Artemis, Niké."

<sup>3</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* III. p. 73.

the earliest times was looked upon after his enthronement as the living form of the sun-god Horus ; but to the religious ideas of the Greeks it was evidently a surprising shock. The distinguishing attribute of a Greek god was his deathlessness or incorruptibility ; and although heroes like Theseus and Heracles were fabled to have become immortal and therefore fit subjects for worship, this was only because they were in the natural way the progeny of the gods themselves, and as such were taken into heaven by their fathers after death and the purging away of their mortal nature<sup>1</sup>. Alexander, on the other hand, demanded from the Greeks as from his other subjects divine honours during his life, and these were accorded to him with servile readiness by the governments of Athens and other Greek city-states, the Spartans not excepted<sup>2</sup>. What he meant exactly by this demand it would be hard to say, because his supposed sonship to Amen on which it was ostensibly based, was, as Sir Gaston Maspero has shown, merely the form by which, on a change of dynasty, the priests of Amen were accustomed to legitimize the accession to the throne of a king who could show no right thereto but force<sup>3</sup>. It is evident, too, that Alexander did not himself take his deification very seriously, since he allowed its propriety to be discussed before him at a wine-party<sup>4</sup> ; and his apologists, Arrian and Plutarch, are possibly well-founded when they declare that it was a mere political device to secure the grudging obedience of his Macedonian countrymen<sup>5</sup>. But his successors in this matter went far beyond him. Ptolemy and Arsinoe, without any pretence of divine descent, were proclaimed " Saviour-gods " for their Greek as well as for their Egyptian subjects quite apart from any

<sup>1</sup> Callisthenes appears to have used this argument against the deification of Alexander during his lifetime, Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk iv. c. 11. Cf. Budge, *Pseudo Callisthenes' History of Alexander the Great*, Cambridge, 1889, Bk III. c. 19, p. 135 ; Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, c. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. 668.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, " Comment Alexandre devenait Dieu." *Annuaire de l'École des Hautes Études*, Paris, 1897 ; *id.* *Ét. Égyptol.* t. vi. pp. 286 *sqq.*

<sup>4</sup> Mr Hogarth, *Philip and Alexander*, pp. 197 *sqq.* rightly points out that he never instituted any cult of himself, as did Demetrius Poliorcetes.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. xxviii ; Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk vii. c. 29.

identification of themselves with Horus or any other native deity. Antigonos, when claiming to be the *strategos* or generalissimo of the whole Empire, was hailed as a god, which drew from the rough old king a repartee more pointed than decent<sup>1</sup>. So, too, was his son, Demetrius the City Taker, although at the time of his deification he had not even an independent kingdom of his own, but was merely ruling Greece as the viceroy of his father. And the barriers between the Divine and the human being thus broken down, men's minds soon became so familiar with the idea that they not only thought men might become gods, but declared that the gods were only deified men. The Athenians in the hymns that they sang to Demetrius declared that he was the only true god, and that the others were either asleep or too far off to be taken into account, or were not really gods at all<sup>2</sup>. But it is not with impunity that the religious ideas of a people can be thus suddenly and violently affronted. Within a few years from Alexander's death, Cassander's friend and envoy Euhemerus put forward, with the aid of a literary fraud something like that of Psalmanazar, the theory that all the gods worshipped by the Greeks had once been kings or at least distinguished men and women upon earth<sup>3</sup>—a doctrine that was received with as much enthusiasm in the Rome of the Republic as it once evoked in our own days among the followers of Herbert Spencer<sup>4</sup>. Later, the Epicurean philosophy, with its happy gods neither interfering with nor caring about the doings of mankind, came to the assistance of this rather crude atheism. Although the Stoic philosophers in their turn tried to introduce a more lofty idea of the Deity, it was probably not until late Roman times that they ever obtained anything like a grip on the people. Whether for good or ill, it is certain that the Greeks after Alexander's death never returned to the simple

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. xxiv; *id. Apophthegmata Antigon.* 7. Cf. Droysen, *op. cit.* II. p. 295. Mr Tarn in his *Antigonos Gonatas*, Oxford, 1913, p. 251, would transfer the story to his grandson, but his reasoning is not convincing.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipnosoph.* Bk vi. c. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* III. p. 22 and note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Euhemerus' work was one of the first Greek books to be translated into Latin. See Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* c. 42.

faith in their national gods which had sufficed for their forefathers.

This is a point that it is important to remember, because without it, it is hard to understand the passion for innovation in religious matters which seems for the next three centuries to possess unchecked sway over mankind. It appeared as if Alexander, who indeed had made all things new, had set free the gods of the ancient world to wander from one end of his Empire to the other, and the desire to proselytize appears for the first time in the world's history. Buddhism must have been prevalent in India for nearly a century before Alexander; but when it became the religion of the state in the reign of Asoka, grandson of that Chandragupta or Sandracottus who had talked with Alexander face to face, the Indian king boasted that he had sent out missionaries for the propagation of his new faith to the courts of Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus<sup>1</sup>. Whether the Indian missionaries ever reached the kings to whom they were sent may be doubted, and it is certain that these last did not pay the attention to them that Asoka claims; but it is quite possible that to the impulse given by such missions may be attributed some of the practices of the Jewish sect of the Essenes, and perhaps the monastic seclusion affected by certain worshippers of the Alexandrian god Serapis<sup>2</sup>. But if Buddhism could thus find its way westward from so distant a country as India, how much more must this have been the case with the other Oriental religions with which the Greeks had already some slight acquaintance, and which, as we shall see in the sequel, poured into Europe in such a flood that Juvenal compared it to the Orontes emptying itself into the Tiber. That the Greeks, ever eager for some new thing, were quick to avail themselves of the new ideas thus thrust upon them was only to be expected. But this rage for novelty was

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* III. p. 341, n. 3. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 1903, p. 298, thinks it possible that the missions although duly recorded on stone were never sent.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II *infra*.



too violent to be content to follow the slow process of assimilation or *theocrasia* which was prevalent before Alexander. Religious associations for the worship of foreign gods were formed in which we may, if we like, see the first germs of the Christian Church<sup>1</sup>. In these each member had to pay a subscription towards the expenses of the cult, and the office-bearers instead of being appointed by the State were either taken from the members in rotation or chosen by lot. That these confraternities, as we should now call them, were at first composed of natives of countries other than Greece is shown by their clustering in the port of the Piraeus as the quarter where foreigners naturally congregated<sup>2</sup>; and their male members for the most part consisted of slaves, freedmen, and stranger merchants, who thus found a meeting-place in what was to them a foreign country. Their worship too was secret or rather was confined to members of the confraternity only, while its correctness of form was preserved by means of written books or rituals, thereby presenting many points of resemblance to that of the later Gnostics. But the superstitious, and especially the women who were always in Greece much addicted to *theo xenia* or the reception of strange gods, were early attracted by them, and they soon spread to every great city in the Empire. Thus we see for the first time in history bodies of men and women banded together, irrespective of nationality and social rank, for the purpose of religious observances, and religion becoming recognized as the affair of the individual rather than of the state, while each member of the association was directly interested in its extension. In this way, the Greeks became worshippers not only of their own sufficiently numerous deities but of those of well nigh the whole East as well. Their inscriptions show that Persian, Phrygian, and Lydian gods were worshipped by these associations, together with a whole crowd of Semitic deities among whom,

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Les Associations Religieuses*, etc., pp. 66-84. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, II. p. 427. The composition of hymns was peculiarly the care of these associations; Foucart, *op. cit.* p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Foucart, *op. cit.* p. 85.

if M. Cumont is right, there may even have been included the God of Israel<sup>1</sup>.

The influence that these confraternities exercised in familiarizing the minds of the Greek citizens with the religious practices and tenets of foreign countries must have been very great. Every such association had a temple of its own, in which it offered sacrifices to its own particular god. But, after providing for this, the greater part of the subscriptions went in providing a periodical banquet at which its members could meet for social intercourse, and to which they were no doubt sometimes allowed to bring guests. But at these gatherings, as apparently at all others of the confraternity, all were equal, and there were no distinctions of rank. Moreover, in addition to the foreign members for whom the institution was originally designed, they must early have begun to admit Greeks; and these were generally, though not always, persons who were in the first instance led to them by a leaning to foreign superstitions, and particularly to that orgiastic ritual with which the worship of the Asiatic gods was generally associated in Greek minds. It is noteworthy that among the Greek names inscribed upon the stelae containing the lists of members that have come down to us, those of women are far more numerous than those of men. Yet they seldom seem to have been of the highest class in their own community, and it is difficult to conceive of a Greek matron leaving her gynaeceum to take part with slaves and freedmen in nocturnal feasts or orgies. Among those whom we know otherwise as belonging to these confraternities are Phryne the celebrated courtesan, Tryphera and Aristion, who followed the same manner of life<sup>2</sup>, and Glaucothea the mother of Æschines and a perfume-seller, a trade then considered as disreputable as in the reign of Louis XIV<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, it seems to follow from what Plutarch says, that King Philip of Macedon first saw

<sup>1</sup> Franz Cumont, "Hypsistos," *Revue de l'Instruction publique en Belgique*, 1897, pp. 5-6; *id.* *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, Paris, 1906, p. 155 and note.

<sup>2</sup> Foucart, *Ass. Rel.* pp. 135, 136, 158.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV *infra*.

and loved Olympias, mother of Alexander, at a meeting of one of these confraternities<sup>1</sup>, and it is possible that outside Greece proper they lost something of their disreputable associations.

It must not be supposed, however, that these associations concerned themselves entirely with what we now call religion. The state, in cities like Athens, regarded them with great jealousy, and did its best to prevent them from forming a hierarchy by stipulating that their officers should only hold office for a year. This naturally prevented any continuity of policy such as a corporation like the priesthood of Amen could pursue, and set their chiefs upon making hay while the sun shone. Ignorant and degraded as most of their members were, and generally engaged in the pursuit of gain, it is not astonishing that they should thus have lent themselves to the worst and most dangerous because most profitable superstitions. The priests and especially the priestesses of the confraternities were always ready to lend themselves to the practices of divination and magic, to the sale of love-philtres and poisons<sup>2</sup>, the interpretations of dreams and miraculous cures. To these charlatans came everyone who wanted his or her fortune told, or who wished to get rid of a rival, or to obtain the favour of a disdainful lover, or was simply tormented with idle fears or by some bodily disease incurable by regular means.

“The set of charlatans and market-men who hang about and wait round the altars of the Great Mother and Serapis; and who manufacture oracles either out of their own heads or by haphazard out of certain books for the benefit of house-slaves and silly women”

is the contemptuous way in which Plutarch describes these impostors<sup>3</sup>. Yet even in this way much was doubtless done to spread the knowledge of foreign religions; for many must have resorted to the foreign temples for magic or divination who would never have thought of joining the association by which they were maintained, and in magic it is

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. II.

<sup>2</sup> See Foucart, *op. cit.* p. 158, for the cases of Ninos and Theoris, priestesses who were condemned for such traffic.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Pythian Responses*, c. xxv.

always the least known gods and those worshipped by the races of lowest culture who are thought to be the most powerful. Moreover, many of these associations in time purified themselves by a sort of process of elimination from these undesirable accessories, and, so soon as they succeeded in attracting the adhesion of a sufficient number of respectable people, managed to get the god they were formed to worship enrolled among the native deities of the state or city. It was in this way that foreign gods like Serapis and Mithras, from being the divinities of a handful of foreign slaves, merchants or hostages, came, as we shall see, to occupy the highest places in the national worship of the Roman Empire. Thus Lucian tells us the story of the impostor Alexander of Abonoteichos, who with the help of a tame serpent with a cardboard mask gave himself out as the priest of an incarnation of Asklepios the Greek god of healing, and founded an association for its worship in Nicomedia in Bithynia. Later, he persuaded one Rutilianus, a man of consular rank who seems to have had influence at the Court of Marcus Aurelius, to join him in the propagation of his new cult and even to marry his daughter<sup>1</sup>. But the worship that he thus set up must have afterwards been recognized by the city of Nicomedia, for we find the representation of its god Glycon upon a Nicomedian coin of the time of the Emperor Gordian, the husband of Tranquillina<sup>2</sup>.

It was apparently in these associations that the new spirit now manifest in the religion of the ancient world began to take organized shape. Among the Persians and Egyptians the priests were officers of state living on the property of their several corporations, and therefore with a natural leaning, except in the rare cases where their privileges or property were threatened by the Crown, against all innovations and interference with the established order of things. Among the Greeks, both in Hellas itself and in her colonies oversea, the priests with a very few exceptions were chosen from the

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Alexander or Pseudomantis*, *passim*. The story is well summarized by Sir Samuel Dill, in *Nero to Marcus*, pp. 473 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Léon Fivel, "Le Dieu Glycon à Nicomédie," *Gazette Archéol.* 1879, p. 186.

native-born citizens at large either for their personal beauty, or for the wealth which enabled them to give in honour of the gods magnificent pageants and other festivals<sup>1</sup>. In no case did they regard themselves as having any teaching or pastoral mission, and were in no way interested in increasing the number of the worshippers of the god to whose service they were elected for a short term. Hence, their chief preoccupation was to keep strictly to precedent in the celebration of the public acts of worship entrusted to them, and they would have looked with horror on any alteration of the traditional rites. But in the associations founded for the worship of foreign gods, affairs were conducted on utterly different lines. There seems to have been a healthy spirit of emulation among the successive holders of the priestly office, for the vote of thanks inscribed on marble and displayed in the temple for the admiration of the confraternity was the distinction most sought after by them, and the deprivation of it was the most serious penalty exacted for dereliction of duty<sup>2</sup>. In order to obtain these rewards, it is plain that the officers had to carry out to the full the Apostolic injunction to be all things to all men, and there is actually a case on record where a priestess is praised because during her term of office she has offended nobody. This complaisance seems to have extended itself from the officials to the deities worshipped, who seem often to have been quite willing to fulfil a double office, and to appear as Aphrodite or Astarte to the Syrian and as Cybele to the Phrygian members of the association<sup>3</sup>. By these means, they made it possible for several nationalities to belong to the same association.

There was probably, however, a more intellectual side to this spirit of accommodation. All, or nearly all, of these associations celebrated mysteries or sacred dramas based on the same lines as the Eleusinian and setting forth, it would seem, the passion, death, and resurrection of some god. These plays, when we consider the relatively slender number of the

<sup>1</sup> Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, II. pp. 418 *sqq.* Cf. Döllinger, *Judenthum und Heidenthum* (English edition), I. p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Foucart, *Ass. Rel.* pp. 33-35.

<sup>3</sup> *Id. op. cit.* pp. 150, 151.

initiates and the limited means at their disposal, must generally have been acted with maimed and abbreviated rites in which a good deal was left to the imagination of the beholder. But this very fact must have set the always curious and inquisitive Greeks upon enquiry into the nature and origin of the scenes thus indicated rather than acted, and this in its turn must have led to many discussions and explanations of the gods there portrayed. For such conversations, too, there must have been far greater opportunities in the case of those *thiasi*, *orgeones*, or *erani* (as these associations were called), where members were few and in the habit of meeting each other daily than with the Eleusinian rites which were celebrated only once or twice a year and then in the presence of a huge crowd dispersed immediately after to the different parts of the Hellenic world. It is hardly putting it too strongly to say that anything like propagandism must have been confined to the smaller societies.

To sum up, then, Alexander united the whole civilized world for the first time under a single head and gave to it a common language and culture. By the natural gifts of his extraordinary personality, he at the same time set before it a perfect model of kingship and thus ensured the persistence of the monarchical principle for two millenia. This, his conscious work, had a direct effect on the evolution of monotheism, while in other respects his conquests proved the turning point in the history of religions. By breaking down the barriers which racial and lingual divisions had hitherto set up between different nations of the earth, these conquests led to a great fusion of the religions hitherto professed by them, and thus opened the door to the world-religions which were afterwards to share between them his vast Empire. Before his coming we see the ancient world divided into separate communities each with its own pantheon and forms of worship and neither knowing nor caring greatly about those of its neighbours. But immediately after, all this is changed. The interchange of ideas between East and West has thrown the different religions of the world as it were into a melting-pot, in which the germs of a different grouping of the human race are dimly visible. The

spirit of proselytism is abroad, and man now wants to impress his own ideas of the Divine upon his fellows. Above all, we see the beginning of those great associations of mankind for religious purposes which are henceforth to be the principal factors in the world's history, and whose evolution has continued unchecked down to the present day. All those that followed Alexander were in this respect nothing more than his conscious or unconscious imitators. The great princes and generals who after his death parted his Empire among them, and the Romans who gradually ate up the fragments left to these princes' effete descendants, could but carry on the work set on foot by the Great Conqueror. As Mr Hogarth has said, very little that he did was ever undone, and for good or ill, he has taken his place among the immortals<sup>1</sup>. Thus, from the scientific point of view, there is none among the forerunners of Christianity who did more to prepare and make ready its way than Alexander.

<sup>1</sup> Hogarth, *Philip and Alexander*, pp. 277, 282. Cf. Bouché-Leclercq in Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. vii.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ALEXANDRIAN DIVINITIES

WHEN Alexander's marshals began immediately after his death to divide his Empire among them, and Ptolemy the son of Lagos claimed and received for his share the province of Egypt, his more ambitious fellows must have smiled at his moderation. Egypt was an acquisition that had never been properly assimilated by the Persians, and although subjugated by Cambyzes very early in their history, had more than once broken out into successful rebellion. Its inhabitants, then as now, were a race separated from the rest of the world by peculiarities of climate, devotedly attached to their own traditional institutions, and bitterly and obstinately hostile to the foreigner. Moreover, the enormous resources of the country were undeveloped, the importance of its new capital of Alexandria as the natural entrepôt of trade between East and West<sup>1</sup> had not then been made manifest, and the agricultural wealth which was afterwards to make Egypt the granary of Europe had been ruined by civil commotions and foreign invasions. Although Alexander was hailed by the Egyptians as a deliverer, and, like other conquerors before and after him, found little difficulty in coming to terms with the colleges of greedy and unpatriotic priests who were ready to welcome any foreign master so long as their own position was assured<sup>2</sup>, he seems to have felt less interest in the unwarlike and servile *fellahin* than in the free warriors of Bactria and India who had fought so gallantly against him. Hence, he paid little

<sup>1</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, Paris, 1903 etc. t. I. p. 121. Dr Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, 1895, p. 11, thinks differently, but the importance of the city to the present day is against him.

<sup>2</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 104. Cf. Mahaffy, *E.P.* p. 4.



attention to their government, and Cleomenes, the ruler he had set over Egypt, thus found himself free to practise extortion on a scale which would certainly have brought down upon him the condign vengeance of his master had it taken place further east<sup>1</sup>. Or perhaps the Great Conqueror, among whose gifts the habit of attending to everything in its turn must certainly be reckoned, thought it well to let all things grow together till the harvest, in the consciousness that the campaign in Arabia, on which he was bent when struck down by the fatal fever, would bring him close to the confines of Egypt and therefore in a position to investigate on the spot the complaints against Cleomenes which had already come to his ears. Be this as it may, one of Ptolemy's first acts on reaching his satrapy was to seize Cleomenes and to put him to death, a proceeding which had, we learn, the full approval of his new subjects. This was but the earliest of a long list of benefits which his rule was to confer upon them, and which under his successors were to raise Egypt to a greater height of prosperity than she had ever enjoyed under her native Pharaohs.

It soon became evident also, that in choosing Egypt for his portion Ptolemy knew very well what he was about. While its western frontier was the Libyan desert and its southern was guarded by the cataracts, its northern coast was so badly off for harbours as to make it difficult to attack by sea, and it was practically unassailable from the east save at the Pelusiac or Port Said mouth of the Nile, and then only by an enemy marching through Syria<sup>2</sup>. Ptolemy, therefore, had ample time to consolidate his power by annexing Cyrene, making friends in his turn with the Egyptian priesthoods, and spending the money raised by Cleomenes' exactions in the enlistment of an army of mercenaries<sup>3</sup>. He also waylaid the body of Alexander on its way to the tombs of the Macedonian kings at Aegae, and installed it in a splendid sepulchre called the Sema at

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *Hist. de l'Hellénisme*, t. II. p. 96 ; Bouché-Leclercq, *op. cit.* t. I. pp. 13, 14 ; Mahaffy, *E. P.* p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> As Demetrius the City-Taker, found to his cost. Cf. Mahaffy, *E. P.* p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I. p. 14 ; Bouché-Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 15.

Alexandria, thereby securing to himself, in the opinion of the time, a talisman of great power<sup>1</sup>. It was not long before the wisdom of these preparations was put to the proof; for, two years after Alexander's death, Perdiccas, the Regent of the Empire, had the new satrap tried in his absence for treason, and led a great army out of Asia Minor by way of Damascus to attack him. He found Ptolemy waiting for him in force at Pelusium, and after some of the royal troops had gone over to the enemy, and those under Perdiccas, in person had suffered a severe repulse near Bubastis, Perdiccas was deposed and murdered<sup>2</sup>. The new settlement of the Empire which followed at Triparadeisos confirmed Ptolemy in the possession of Egypt, and left him in comparative peace to organize a kingdom which only ended three centuries later with Cleopatra<sup>3</sup>.

Of the able and statesmanlike measures which Ptolemy took towards this end, only one need concern us here. The plan may have been Alexander's own, for no one was more likely to know Alexander's later mind than Ptolemy, who had been his master's companion from his youth, had shared his exile when banished by Philip, and had distinguished himself in India as one of his most trusted lieutenants. It is not impossible that among Alexander's plans for the government of his Empire, a religion common to both Greek and barbarian may have been included; for it is difficult otherwise to explain the active part that he took in the different religious observances of all his subjects, while the constant inquisitiveness concerning them which he showed can hardly have been merely archaeological<sup>4</sup>. At all events, soon after Ptolemy found himself secure in the possession of Egypt, he set himself to work to found a religion that should unite both his Greek and his Egyptian subjects in the bonds of a common faith. At first sight, no two things can seem more dissimilar than the religions of the two nations; but there was one point where they drew very near to each other, and it was to this that Ptolemy addressed himself.

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* II. p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *Hist. des Lag.* I. pp. 24, 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* I. p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* I. pp. 346, 699, 670. Cf. D. G. Hogarth, *Philip and Alexander*, p. 144.

Now religion in Egypt had always been very much in the hands of a professional priesthood who here, as elsewhere in Africa, formed organized corporations greedy for political sway, and sometimes proved more powerful than the king himself<sup>1</sup>. So far as the monuments show, the first of these corporations in point of time was that of the worshippers of the sun-god Ra, the chief seat of whose worship was Annu, On, or Heliopolis in the Delta. Its members were apparently the religious advisers of the vth or Pyramid-building Dynasty, and to them must be attributed the earliest or Heliopolitan recension of the *Book of the Dead* engraved on the walls of the chambers in the Saqqarah Pyramids. This corporation seems to have flourished unchecked until the Hyksos conquest, but was succeeded, when the invaders were cast out, by that of the priests of Amen of Thebes who, after crushing the "heresy" or religious revolt of King Amenhotep IV, gradually became the supreme power in the state, and established the theocracy or rule of the priest-kings, under which Egypt went rapidly down the hill. The decadence was stayed for a time by an uprising of the Libyan mercenaries, who placed their leader Sheshonq or Shishak, Solomon's suzerain, upon the throne, and thus founded the xxind Dynasty. The deposed corporation of Amen thereupon transferred themselves to Ethiopia or Nubia, where they established a theocracy on the model of that at Thebes, and whence they returned later with an army of Sudanese to again enslave their native country. But Piankhi and his Ethiopians found themselves unable to rule Egypt from Napata, and when they finally retired behind the Cataracts, there was a brief but brilliant revival of old Egyptian ideas under the Saite or Philhellene kings of the Delta, who called in Greek and Carian mercenaries to the support of their throne. It was in their time that Herodotus visited the country, and Egypt began

<sup>1</sup> As when they seized the throne of Egypt at the close of the xxth Dynasty. So in Nubia in the time of the Ptolemies, the king was a mere puppet in the hands of the priests, who used to send him word when they thought that he had reigned long enough. For the story of Ergamenes (Ark-amén), who put an end to their rule, see Diodorus Siculus, III. 6. 3, or Budge, *History of Egypt*, 1899, vol. VIII. pp. 166 sqq.

again to play its part in the stirring events then fast coming upon Western Asia. It seems probable also that under them, the religious corporations, among whom the priests of Ptah of Memphis, one of the oldest of the gods of Egypt, for the first time take a prominent place, regained the influence which they had never wholly lost. Then came the Persian invasion, and although Egypt made more than one successful attempt to shake off the yoke of the foreigners, it was at last riveted firmly on her neck. After the flight of Nectanebo, the last king of the xxxth Dynasty, she was never again ruled by a prince of Egyptian blood<sup>1</sup>.

During this long period—which is often quoted, not without reason, as the classic instance of the evils attending the Priest in Power—the mass of the Egyptian people had clung firmly to the worship of one god whose vogue goes back to very early times. While the rich and powerful were raising temples to Ra and Amen and showering wealth upon their priesthoods, the poorer classes remained faithful to Osiris and the gods of his cycle with such effect that most of the other divinities found it necessary to include him in their own cults. In the very earliest recension of the *Book of the Dead*, we find Osiris invoked together with Ra in a way that gives no hint that one has any superiority over the other<sup>2</sup>; in the great recension of the xviii<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Osiris and Ra, already made into the “king of the gods” by his union with Amen, are said to have “joined souls” and become one<sup>3</sup>; and in the Saitic period, Osiris became united with Ptah and a very ancient divinity called Seker, in a triune deity called Ptah-Seker-Osiris to whom everyone looked for happiness after death<sup>4</sup>. So, when the bull Apis came to be

<sup>1</sup> See Breasted, *History of Egypt*, New York, 1909, *passim*; cf. Budge, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Wiedemann, *The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul*, 1895, p. viii; Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* i. pp. 123, 167; *ibid.* ii. p. 196, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, i. pp. 148, 149; Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, 1906, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Erman, *op. cit.* p. 188. The fusion of Osiris with Ptah and Seker was a good deal older than the Saites. Cf. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1897, pp. 134, 135; Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, New York, 1911, i. p. 45.

adored, he was said to be the "life of Osiris," meaning probably his earthly incarnation<sup>1</sup>, and there is fairly good evidence that Osiris had long before absorbed into himself the personality of several older deities, such as Khent-Amentit "Lord of Amenti," and Apuat "the opener of the ways<sup>2</sup>." It is plain, therefore, that the practice of *theocrasia* which we have seen rife among the Greeks was known to the Egyptians from the very earliest times<sup>3</sup>. Yet, all this was effected without there ever having been a special priesthood or college of priests of Osiris such as undoubtedly existed in the case of Ra, Amen, and probably Ptah. It seems really a case of the survival of the fittest, or, in other words, of the choice by the Egyptian people of the worship of the god best suited to their wants, in spite of the well-meant attempts of their rulers to draw their attention to other deities.

The reason for this obstinacy of choice is perhaps to be found in the legend or myth of Osiris, which was at once more consistent and more direct in its appeal to human sympathies than those handed down concerning the other gods of Egypt. We are told that Osiris was the first-born of Nut the sky-goddess by Geb the earth-god, that he appeared upon earth as a man among men, and became king of Egypt, which he ruled wisely and well, teaching the Egyptians the art of agriculture, giving them just laws, and instructing them in the proper worship of the gods. Later, he travelled over the whole earth, civilizing and subduing the nations not by force of arms but by persuasion and especially by the art of music which he took with him. On his return, he was entrapped and murdered by his jealous brother Set or Typhon who, with the aid of seventy-two conspirators and an Ethiopian queen called Aso, shut him up in a coffin and threw him into the Nile, by which his body was carried out to sea.

<sup>1</sup> Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, II. p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Budge, *G.E.* II. pp. 118, 156, 264. So Naville, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1914, pp. 7, 8. M. Maspero thinks Apuat was originally god of Siut and only a temple-companion of Osiris at Abydos, *Rev. Critique*, 1904, pt 2, pp. 194, 195.

<sup>3</sup> Steindorff, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, New York, 1905, p. 53; Erman, *H.E.R.* pp. 56, 57; Naville, *The Old Egyptian Faith*, 1906, pp. 146, 147.

We further learn that his sister-wife Isis, who had reigned in his stead during his absence, mourned greatly for his loss and wandered far and wide seeking and lamenting him, until she heard from some children that the coffin containing his remains had been carried away by the Tanitic mouth of the Nile. Following this, she found that it had been washed ashore at Byblus in Phoenicia and had been overgrown by a magnificent tamarisk, which the king of the country had had cut down and made into the roof-tree or pillar supporting his house. Then Isis disguised herself as a servant and became the nurse of the king's son, whom she would have made immortal but for the timidity of his mother, who cried out when she saw the child surrounded by the flames which were to burn away his mortality. On this, the goddess revealed herself, took away the pillar containing the coffin, and attempted to revive the corpse that it contained by her embrace. Afterwards, she gave birth to her son Horus, whom she destined from his cradle to be the avenger of his father. Meanwhile, the murderer Set had seized the throne of Egypt, and while hunting by moonlight came across the corpse of Osiris, which he tore into fourteen pieces, and scattered them throughout the land. Consequently Isis, who was at the time visiting Horus at nurse in her city of Buto, had to begin again her wanderings, sailing over the swamps in a boat of papyrus, and burying the fragments of the body of Osiris wherever she found them. One part, however, she could not find, this having been thrown into the Nile and devoured by fishes; and henceforth Osiris became king of the Underworld, where he rules for ever over the dead, welcoming those who successfully win through the ordeal of the judgment that all must undergo, and providing for them a happy life like that which the rich live on earth, in which agriculture plays a prominent part. Then Horus grew up to man's estate, and having provided himself with horse, fought three desperate battles with Set, many of whose followers came over to him. But, although he defeated his foe, he did not put an end to his existence, and Set still lives, haunting the deserts and wild places, and even, according to one variant of the story, ruling for a time over the south of Egypt (or perhaps only a part of it), while the sway of

Horus over the north remained unchallenged. As for the other gods of the cycle, Nephthys, the twin sister and reflection of Isis, was the wife of Set, but preferred to throw in her lot with Osiris, by whom she had a son, Anubis the jackal, the messenger of Osiris, who possessed many of the attributes of the Greek Hermes. So, too, Thoth, the ibis, was the judge who pronounced, or perhaps merely recorded, the final partition or arrangement between Horus and Set, and most of the other members of the Egyptian Pantheon were brought into the cycle one way or the other.

This is the legend of Osiris, as we find it in the tract *de Iside et Osiride*, which is generally attributed to Plutarch and was certainly written in the first century A.D. It has not been met with earlier in a connected form; but its main incidents are sufficiently corroborated by the monuments of the time to convince us that it fairly represents the popular belief of the Egyptians during the Ptolemaic period<sup>1</sup>. Plutarch, or the writer who assumed his name, gives us more than one explanation of it coupled with analogies drawn from other mythologies, which exhibit considerable archaeological knowledge and show us how far the comparative study of religions had proceeded even in his time. When he fails, it is generally from lack of acquaintance with the earlier forms of the religions of Egypt, which had evidently become in those days as much a mystery to the priests as to their flocks, and which the labours of modern Egyptologists have but recently begun to recover for us. Looked at by their light, and stripped of its many transparent inconsistencies and anachronisms, it seems plain that the story is not simple but compound, and represents an attempt to fuse together the religious ideas either of different peoples or of the same people at different stages of culture<sup>2</sup>. In the first place,

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *Essai sur le Gnosticisme Égyptien*, Paris, 1887, p. 144; Budge, "Papyrus of Nesi-Amsu," in *Archæologia*, 1890, pt 2, p. 404; Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, 1894, pp. 172-174; Erman, *H.E.R.* p. 32; Budge, *G.E.* II. p. 150. Manifest allusions to the legend are to be found in the Pyramid Texts. Cf. Maspero, *Les Inscriptions des Pyramides de Saqqarah*, Paris, 1894, pp. 105 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> This idea is treated at length in "The Legend of Osiris" in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1911, pp. 139-154. See also "The Greek Worship of Serapis and Isis," *P.S.B.A.* 1914, pp. 79 sqq.

we see in it the animal gods of Egypt—Horus the falcon, Set the unknown animal or *scha* sacred to him, Anubis the jackal, and Thoth the ibis—whom we now know to have been the totems or rallying-signs of the different tribes who invaded Egypt, probably from other parts of Africa, in predynastic times. The *Sches-Hor* or Followers of Horus are so often alluded to in early dynastic texts that there can be no doubt that the tribe who had the falcon for their banner were originally the royal or leading tribe of these invaders. The memory of this fact was preserved in the custom, going back to the beginning of the 1st Dynasty, which assigned to the ruler of Egypt on his coronation a special name differing from that by which he was usually known, and borne in a rectangle representing the façade or front of a palace surmounted by a hawk<sup>1</sup>. Recent excavations at Abydos in Upper Egypt have shown that this custom was only once broken in the long course of Egyptian history, when a king of the II<sup>nd</sup> or III<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty, whose name is read Perabsen, cast out the falcon from above the *srekh* or rectangle containing his “hawk” or Horus name, and crowned it instead with the animal representing Set. This breach of conventional usage—whether significant of a political or a religious revolution or of some predominating foreign influence cannot be exactly determined—was healed by his immediate successor Khasekhmui, who bore both the falcon and the Set-animal above his *srekh* with an inscription proclaiming himself “He who has caused the two gods to be at peace”; after which the rulers of Egypt returned to the hawk-crowned *srekh*, which was never again abandoned down to the last-known example under the Roman emperors. We may assume then that the fundamental stratum of the Osiris legend was a tradition more or less historical which preserved the memory of a struggle for supremacy occurring in the earliest historical times between the tribes represented by Horus and Set respectively. As the horse was a late comer into Egypt, and seems to have been introduced there by the Bedouins of the Sinaitic peninsula, where Perabsen’s predecessors left their

<sup>1</sup> See “The Titles of the Thinite Kings” in *P.S.B.A.* 1908, pp. 86-94, 121-128, 163-177.



inscriptions, we may even read into it the statement that, while the Horus or falcon tribe were helped in the war by Bedouin cavalry, the followers of Set sought aid from the Nubian or "Ethiopian" tribes above the Cataracts<sup>1</sup>.

To this foundation, however, there must have been added a myth conceived by a race in possession of a much higher degree of culture and greater imaginative powers than any with which the predynastic or protodynastic Egyptians can be credited. The earliest gods of Egypt of whom we have any record were, as we have seen, either animals or inanimate objects, a fact which is sufficiently explained by their totemic origin<sup>2</sup>. But spread throughout the basin of the Mediterranean, we find from the earliest times the worship of a god who was from his birth never anything but a man and a man who suffered a veritable death and passion before his resurrection and deification. Thus, in Crete we have the legend of the infant Zagreus, son of Zeus and Persephone, who was treacherously seized by the earth-born Titans, torn in pieces, and devoured, but was afterwards reborn as Dionysos to reign over gods and men<sup>3</sup>. So, too, in Cyprus, Syria, and Phoenicia, we hear of Adonis, the lover of Aphrodite, done to death by the boar's tusk, but returning yearly from the shades to spend part of the year with his mistress. In Asia Minor, again, was told the story of Atys, lover of Cybele, mother of the gods, who fatally mutilated himself in a fit of madness, but after death was resuscitated, and thereafter reigned with Cybele over all Nature. All these three legends bear too close a resemblance to that of Osiris for the four to have grown up independently, and although the point is not free from doubt, it is improbable that Egypt was

<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch's time the Ethiopians had a queen called Candace as in Acts viii. 27. Cf. Strabo, Bk xvii. c. 1, § 54. One wonders whether Plutarch in speaking of Aso did not confuse this title with an epithet of Thueris, the hippopotamus-goddess and wife of Set, who is called in a late magical text "Thueris, the great of sorcery, cat of Ethiopia." See Griffith and Thompson, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, Oxford, 1900, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> This is most clearly shown by M. Victor Loret in *L'Égypte au Temps du Totémisme*, Paris, 1906, *passim*. Cf. the same author's articles in *Rev. Égyptol.* 1902 and 1904.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV, *infra*.

the source from which the others were derived<sup>1</sup>. No direct connection in ancient times can be traced between Egypt and the inland country of Phrygia, which seems to be the birthplace of the majority of these legends; while it is of great importance to remember that Isis, Osiris' queen and sister, is represented in the early Egyptian myths as merely a magician or witch cunning in spells<sup>2</sup>, whereas in the Phrygian and Syrian legends the consort of the dying god is the "mother of all living" or in other words Nature herself. It seems therefore probable that the legend of Osiris, like so many other things in Egypt, was African as to its body, but Asiatic or European as to its head.

It was therefore natural that in this legend of Osiris, Ptolemy should find the desired point of contact between the religions of the Egyptians and the Greeks. The religious institution which commanded the most respect among the Greeks of his time was undoubtedly the Mysteries of Eleusis<sup>3</sup>, which were yearly celebrated with a circumstance that drew upon them the attention of the whole Hellenic world. Messengers went forth every year from Eleusis to all countries where Athenians could be found, to proclaim the Sacred Truce that was to ensure peace during the celebration of the Mysteries. Then on the appointed day in September, enormous numbers of Greeks from all parts of the world gathered together in Athens for a festival that lasted for nearly two weeks. First came the assembly of the worshippers and the proclamation of the hierophant that none but those unpolluted by crime and of intelligible speech (*i.e.* not barbarians) might take part in the Mysteries. Then

<sup>1</sup> See "The Greek Worship of Serapis and Isis," *P.S.B.A.* 1914, pp. 94-98, for this culture god of the Eastern Mediterranean. The original home of the myth was, possibly, Babylonia. Cf. "Legend of Osiris" in *P.S.B.A.* 1911, quoted above.

<sup>2</sup> See the story of Ra and Isis, Budge, *G.E.* pp. 360 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> By far the best and most consistent account of the Eleusinian Mysteries is that given by M. Paul Foucart in his three memoirs, *Recherches sur l'origine et la nature des Mystères d'Éleusis*, *Les Grands Mystères d'Éleusis*, and *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique*. All these appeared in the *Mémoires* of the Académie des Inscriptions, tt. xxxv. (1895), xxxvii. (1900), and xxxviii. (1904) respectively.

followed the solemn procession when the sacred objects, upon which none but the initiated might look, were brought from Eleusis under strong guard and lodged in the Eleusinion at the foot of the Acropolis, their arrival being formally notified to the priestess of Athena, the tutelary deity of the city. Next was made the proclamation of "To the sea, the initiates!" when all who were to take part in the ceremonies descended to the harbour of Phalerum<sup>1</sup> to wash themselves and the animals intended for sacrifice in the salt water, in the belief that, as Euripides said, "Sea-waves wash away all sin." After a time spent in sacrificing and austerities very proper for bringing the worshippers into a receptive state of mind, there was formed the long procession which paced the Sacred Way, twelve miles long, from Athens to Eleusis, beguiling the road with hymns and choruses addressed to Iacchos, the infant Dionysos<sup>2</sup>, who was supposed to lead the procession from his Athenian temple, the Iaccheion, with a pause at the bridge over the Cephissus, where the crowd exchanged coarse jokes and sarcasms in a manner peculiarly Attic. Then came the arrival by night of the procession at the Telesterion or Hall of Initiations at Eleusis, the sky above which was made light by the glare of the torches<sup>3</sup>. There, after more sacrifices, a sacred banquet, in which it is not impossible that the mystic *cyceon* or consecrated drink was partaken of, and sacrifices in the temples of Demeter, of Hades, and of Persephone with which the Hall was surrounded, the initiates were shown a sacred drama, like the mystery-plays of the Middle Ages, acted by the priests of the cult, whose office, contrary to the custom of Greek cults generally, was confined to two families in which it was hereditary and highly paid. This drama, the details of which were kept strictly secret and can only be gathered from hints appearing in writers

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Les Grands Mystères*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Iacchos was identified with Dionysos at least as early as the time of Sophocles. Cf. *Antigone*, ll. 1130 *sqq.*, and Dyer, *The Gods in Greece*, 1891, p. 133. Very likely, as M. Foucart suggests, he was originally the personification of the cry repeated by the procession of the initiated. See *Grds. Myst.* p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> It had an opening in the roof for this purpose. Foucart, *Grds. Myst.* p. 137.

of a comparatively late date, seems to have set forth the Rape of Persephone, daughter of Demeter the earth-goddess, who was known and worshipped throughout Greece and her colonies as the teacher of agriculture and giver of laws to mortals. The initiates saw "with their own eyes" the capture of Persephone, when playing with her companions in the sunny fields of Eleusis<sup>1</sup>, by Hades or Pluto the king of the dead, who takes her to his own gloomy abode beneath the earth, and the wanderings of Demeter in search of her lost child. Then they were shown how Demeter came to the house of Celeus, king of Eleusis, how she became nurse to the king's child Demophoon, and was detected by his mother attempting to burn away his mortal part in the way which the Egyptian legend attributed to Isis<sup>2</sup>. The next act, probably reserved for epopts or initiates of the second year only, exhibited the union of Zeus with Demeter<sup>3</sup>, and the birth from the latter of a mysterious child in whom some see the Iacchos who conducted the procession from Athens to Eleusis, but who was certainly Dionysos in one or other of his forms<sup>4</sup>. We know also that the initiates took part in

<sup>1</sup> So Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, c. II. The scene of the Rape is laid in many different places. The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* calls it "the Mysian plain," meaning probably Mysia in Asia Minor. A scholiast on Hesiod puts it in Sicily, Bacchylides in Crete, Orpheus in "the parts about Ocean," Phanodemus in Attica, Demades in "woodland glades." See Abel, *Orphica*, Fragg. 212, p. 239. Cf. Maury, *Religions de la Grèce Antique*, t. I. p. 479.

<sup>2</sup> Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.

<sup>3</sup> Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* p. 49; *id. Grds. Myst.* pp. 68, 69.

<sup>4</sup> M. Foucart, *Culte de Dion.* pp. 55-60, will not allow that Iacchos was ever identified with Dionysos and believes him to have been only the genius that led the procession. Dyer, on the other hand (*op. cit.* p. 128), makes Iacchos the young or second Dionysos born of Semele. But Aristophanes, *Frogs*, l. 321, and Strabo, Bk. x. c. 10 (p. 402 Didot), both give him a higher position in the Mysteries than M. Foucart would assign to him, and the older opinion that he was the child whose birth was there shown seems to hold good. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de G. A.* t. II. p. 341, and Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk. II. c. 16, § 3 (p. 50, Didot). So Stephani, *Compte Rendu de la Commission Imperiale Archéologique*, 1859 (St Petersburg), p. 37, where monumental evidence is given in its support. Cf. Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Antiquités*, s.v. Eleusinia (by F. Lenormant); Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. II.; Libanius, *ὑπὲρ Ἀριστοφάνους*, vol. I. pp. 447, 448 (Reiske).

wanderings in dark passages and over obstacles and difficulties, which were supposed to give them an idea of the sufferings of the uninitiated dead in the next world, and that they were then restored to upper air in a blaze of brilliant light, were shown the mysterious objects brought with such care from Eleusis to Athens and back again, were given a glimpse of the beatitudes awaiting the dead who had been initiated in their lifetime, and were at the same time instructed in certain mysterious phrases or formulas which it seems fair to conclude they were to treasure as passwords through the realms of Hades<sup>1</sup>. It seems probable from this that the initiates were supposed to accompany Hermes the Psychopomp or "leader of souls" as the messenger of Zeus to the underworld, there to accomplish the deliverance of Persephone and to witness her restoration to the heavenly regions where she was again united to her sorrowing mother. Finally, there appeared Triptolemus, Celeus' son and Demeter's pupil, setting out in his car drawn by serpents to spread the knowledge of agriculture throughout the world, "an ear of corn reaped in silence" being, as we learn from a Christian writer, the "mighty and wonderful and most perfect mystery" exhibited to the highest degree of initiates<sup>2</sup>.

It will be noticed that we have spoken hitherto of initiates; for none might enter the Telesterion unless they had previously been initiated, and two young Acarnanians who unwittingly did so were formally tried for sacrilege and put to death<sup>3</sup>. This initiation, or entry into the ranks of those privileged to behold these wonderful sights, began at the Little Mysteries, which were celebrated six or seven months before the Great or Eleusinian Mysteries properly so called, at Agra on the left bank of the Ilissus. These mysteries of Agra were under the control of the same sacred families as the Mysteries of Eleusis, for which

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 1, p. 171, Cruice. The whole drama is described by Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* pp. 43-74 *q.v.*

<sup>3</sup> Livy, xxxi. 14. Cf. Foucart, *Grds. Myst.* p. 94. They betrayed themselves by asking questions which showed they had not been initiated. Hence the *ιερά* or sacred objects could hardly have been statues, as some have thought.

they formed a necessary preparation. They were kept, if possible, even more strictly secret than the Great Mysteries, and the only direct evidence that has come down to us as to their nature tells us that they also took the form of a sacred drama, and that the scenes there enacted were taken from the legend of Dionysos<sup>1</sup>. This Dionysos, however, was not in the first instance the Theban god of wine born from Semele and celebrated by the poets, but his Cretan namesake Dionysos Zagreus or "the hunter," who was said to have been begotten by Zeus in the form of a serpent upon his own daughter Persephone, and while still a child was, as has been mentioned above, torn in pieces by the earth-born Titans from jealousy at hearing that the child was to be made the ruler of the world. It was also said that the scattered members of the baby-god were collected by Demeter, put together and revived, a myth which late researches seem to show was alluded to in the Anthesteria, a festival celebrated in the Dionysion at Athens in the same Anthesterion or "flower month" as the Little Mysteries. There is much reason to think that the Anthesteria showed forth in a manner unintelligible to the beholders unless otherwise acquainted with the details of the legend, the putting-together of the different members—said to be fourteen in number—of the infant Dionysos, his subsequent resurrection, and his marriage with a priestess called "the Queen" who doubtless represented Demeter or Persephone. The inference seems unavoidable that it was some part of this legend that was acted in a manner impossible to misunderstand or mistake before the eyes of those admitted to the Little Mysteries<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Culte de Dion*. p. 68; Stephen of Byzantium in Hesychius, *Etymologium Magnum*, s.v. "Ἀγρᾶ. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce Ant.* II. p. 324. All that Stephen says is that here was acted a pantomime (μίμημα) of the things that happened to Dionysos.

<sup>2</sup> All these ceremonies of the Anthesteria are reconstructed and described by M. Foucart, *Culte de Dion*. pp. 107–163. That the tearing in pieces of Dionysos and the consequent origin of man was taught in the Little Mysteries seems to follow from Pindar's words (*Threnoi* Frag. x. 7, p. 102, Cod. Bō.) that those who have been initiated have seen "the God-given beginning of life." Transmigration seems to have been also

We see then that between the legend of Osiris as told by Plutarch and the legend of Eleusis as set forth in the Mysteries there were resemblances so close as to make it almost impossible that one should not be derived from the other, unless we are prepared to consider them as having a common origin. As Osiris was torn into fourteen pieces, so was Dionysos, the difference in the agents of this "diaspasm," as it was called, being due to the exigencies of Egyptian traditional history. The wanderings of Isis, again, find an exact parallel in those of Demeter, the object of the search differing slightly in the two cases, while the mysterious birth of Horus, the successor of Osiris, corresponds point for point with that of Dionysos in his second form of Iacchos. That both stories may have had their source in the folk-lore explaining the phenomena of the annual decay and rebirth of vegetation, Dr Frazer has shown with great attention to detail in *The Golden Bough* and elsewhere<sup>1</sup> to be possible; but this was too philosophical an idea for the sixth century B.C., when the Mysteries of Eleusis were founded or reduced to order<sup>2</sup>. Herodotus, a century later, no doubt expressed the views of the learned of his day when he asserted that the worship of Dionysos was brought into Greece from Egypt<sup>3</sup>, and among modern scholars M. Foucart, who has done more than anyone to collate the few relics that remain to us of the Eleusinian worship, fully supports him in this. It

taught in them (see Plutarch, *Consolatory Letter*, § x.). There were therefore three degrees of initiation at Eleusis: (1) The Little Mysteries showing the history of Dionysos, (2) The Great Mysteries with the Rape of Persephone and the Wanderings of Demeter, and (3) The Epopsy (open to initiates of the second year only), showing the marriage of Zeus and Demeter and the birth of the new Dionysos.

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (third edition), Part IV, c. 5; Part V, vol. i, pp. 12, 263.

<sup>2</sup> The end of the Athenian monarchy and flight of the Pisistratids took place about 500 B.C. (see Chapter IV, *infra*). The Eleusinia were probably reformed not long before.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, Bk II. c. 49; Diod. Sic. Bk I. c. 96, § 4 *sqq.* It may, on the other hand, have been introduced from Asia Minor or the Mediterranean Islands, where it was certainly prevalent at a very early date. See articles in *P.S.B.A.* for 1911 and 1914 above quoted.

is therefore plain that the resemblances between the Dionysiae and the Egyptian worship were many and salient. Hence Ptolemy found his way clear when he invited Timotheos the Eumolpid, a member of one of the sacred families in which the Eleusinian priesthood was, as has been said, hereditary, and associated with him the Egyptian priest Manetho in the task of founding a religion which should be common to Egyptians and Greeks alike<sup>1</sup>.

In framing this new religion, the first care of the king and his advisers was evidently to avoid shocking the religious and artistic feelings of the Greeks. Ptolemy Soter's position seems to have been much like that of a modern Governor-General of India; for, while he was not only tolerant but careful of the religious susceptibilities of the native Egyptians, his own Court remained in everything predominantly or exclusively Greek. In Alexandria, the site of which under the native Pharaohs had been the small fishing village of Rhacotis, he had practically virgin soil, in which it is doubtful whether any Egyptian temple existed, and it was consequently, as Alexander intended it should be, in all respects a Greek city. Greek was the language there spoken, and it was to the care taken by Alexandrian scholars to preserve the language and literature of Hellas in its native purity, that we are indebted for most of what we know of the classic tongue at its best. Its large garrison consisted almost entirely of Greek soldiers drilled and armed in the Macedonian fashion, and to the great University or Museum, which Ptolemy's munificence founded for the sustentation of scholars, there flocked learned men from every part of the Hellenic world<sup>2</sup>. Here, indeed, was the first instance of the endowment

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. xxviii; Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. cap. 83, 84. Plutarch calls Timotheos the "exegete," i.e. the interpreter or dragoman; so that his being a Eumolpid would seem to rest on the testimony of Tacitus only; but there were "exegetes" attached to the Eumolpids at Eleusis, see Foucart, *Grds. Myst.* pp. 79 sqq. Bouché-Leclercq, *Hist. des Lagides*, i. p. 118, thinks the names Timotheos and Manetho only cover the fact that the new religion was compounded from the Eleusinian and the Osirian cults.

<sup>2</sup> Bouché-Leclercq (*Hist. des Lagides*, i. p. 129, n. 2) thinks the tradition that the Museum was founded by Ptolemy II Philadelphus erroneous. The



of research ; and the experiment had important results for most of the modern sciences, not excluding that transmutation of metals which made such wild work among some of the best brains of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, but which Sir William Ramsay has lately shown to be more capable of accomplishment than could have been expected from an alchemist's dream. At the Museum, Eratosthenes, " the Inspector of the Earth," first set on foot the serious study of geography, Hipparchus laid the sure foundations of the modern science of astronomy, and Hero invented the first steam engine. The investigation of those secondary laws by which their insight perceived nature to be governed was indeed the constant occupation of King Ptolemy's " stuffed capons," as Timon of Phlya contemptuously called them<sup>1</sup>. But these philosophers would have been the first to receive with scorn the proposition that anyone should be asked to worship the " brutish gods " of Egypt under those animal forms in which they had long been known to the more simple minded Egyptians. Osiris, the " bull of Amenti," as he is called in the early texts, was worshipped under the actual form of the bull Apis at Memphis and as a ram or goat at Mendes. Isis was often portrayed with the cow's head which commemorated one of the incidents of her myth as set forth by Plutarch. Horus, who was in fact an older god than either of them, was, as the totem of the royal tribe of the first invaders, worshipped at Edfu and elsewhere as a hawk, and although the Egyptian priests kept up as long as possible the distinction between this " Horus the elder " and Horus the son of Isis, it is certain that their Greek worshippers saw no difference between the two. While Timotheos was doubtless willing to recognize the Eleusinian deities, of whose worship his family were the traditional guardians, in the Egyptian triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, he must have been sure that he could not ask his art-loving countrymen to do them homage in the guise of beasts or birds.

date of Demetrius of Phalerum's leaving Athens to take charge of it marks it as the foundation of Ptolemy Soter. Cf. Mahaffy, *Empire of Ptolemies*, pp. 91, 92.

<sup>1</sup> See Mahaffy, *op. cit.* p. 98.

The difficulty was got over in a way that was characteristic enough. The *theocrasia* or fusion of one god with another which we have seen playing such a prominent part in the religion of both Egyptians and Greeks, was of the very essence of the religion of Eleusis. At no time from the earliest mention of the Eleusinian worship onwards, is it possible to draw any sharp dividing line between Demeter and her daughter Persephone, or as Mr Louis Dyer rather flamboyantly puts it, Demeter and Persephone were at Eleusis "regarded as one, being so filled with mutual love that all barriers between them melted away<sup>1</sup>." "Excepting," he says again, "in her days of thoughtless youth, Demeter's Persephone is Demeter's self twice told," and the same dogma seems to have been prematurely revealed by *Xenophanes* of Colophon, who was exiled for his declaration that all the gods of his fellow-countrymen were but varying forms of the one deity. This identity of the goddesses of Eleusis must have been constantly present to the mind of the Greeks, who hardly ever spoke of Demeter and Persephone save as "the Goddesses Twain" or as the Mother-and-Daughter. But this was only the first step in what was called without circumlocution the "mystic *theocrasia*<sup>2</sup>," which went so far as to include in the persons of the Eleusinian deities nearly all the gods of the Hellenic pantheon. In the original Cretan legend, the infant Dionysos is the son of Zeus, whom he is destined to succeed upon his throne, as Zeus had succeeded in the Homeric myths his father Kronos, and this last, *his* father Ouranos. But the Zeus of Eleusis was by no means the Zeus of Olympos whom Homer hails as "father of gods and men," but who had to yield the empire of the seas to his brother Poseidon and that of the netherworld to his brother Hades. Originally known at Eleusis

<sup>1</sup> Dyer, *Gods in Greece*, pp. 178, 179, and pp. 73, 74. An inscription making the identification has been found at Smyrna. See O. Rayet in the *Rev. Archéologique* for 1877, pp. 175-178, where its date is put at the middle of the third century B.C., and the vases of Gerhard there quoted. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, II. p. 362; F. Lenormant in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiquités*, s.v. Eleusinia, p. 549, and authorities there quoted.

<sup>2</sup> Damascius, *Vit. Isidor*, § 106. For definition of term, see *ibid.* §§ 3, 5.

as "the God" only, as Demeter with or without her daughter was called "the Goddess," the Eleusinian god was also invoked as Zeus Chthonios or the infernal Zeus, called by euphemism Zeus Eubuleus (Zeus of Good Counsel), Pluto (Bringer of Riches) and other similar names<sup>1</sup>. But by whatever name he was called, he was always the king of the dead, and was thus again brought near to Dionysos, whom Heraclitus of Ephesus, two centuries before Alexander, had declared to be the same god as Hades, lord of the netherworld<sup>2</sup>. In this double capacity, Dionysos was therefore the brother, father, and spouse of his consort Demeter, of whom he was also the child. He might therefore be considered one of the first instances known in the history of religions as a god who was, according to the way in which he was regarded, either father or son<sup>3</sup>. Nor did the *theocrasia* stop here. The Asiatic forms of Dionysos, whether we call them Atys, Adonis or by any other name, were often represented as of both sexes, a doctrine which is also denoted by Dionysos' Orphic epithet of Mise, and led to his being portrayed in effeminate shape<sup>4</sup>. Hence, Dionysos and Demeter or Persephone might be regarded as the God under both the male and female aspect. Moreover, Zeus was said to have ordered the corpse of Dionysos to be buried at Delphi, where secret ceremonies were celebrated in connection with it by five priests called Hosioi; and this seems to have led to the idea common

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* p. 34. He suggests that the real names were "ineffable," i.e. only revealed to initiates. Xenocrates, whose date may be put at 396-314 B.C., seems to have known of a supernal and infernal Zeus (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk v. c. 11), and a fragment attributed to Euripides identifies Zeus with Hades (*id. loc. cit.*).

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. xxviii.; Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. II.

<sup>3</sup> This was noticed by Clement of Alexandria, who (*Strom.* Bk v. c. 14) says that Homer and Orpheus both "show forth" the Christian doctrine in this respect. The verse he quotes from Orpheus makes Dionysos both the father and son of Zeus. Cf. Abel's *Orphica*, Frag. 237.

<sup>4</sup> As in the Orphic verse: "Zeus is a male, Zeus is an immortal virgin," Abel, *Orphica*, Fr. 46. Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 140, points out that Xenocrates and the Stoics both made the same assertion. Cf. authorities quoted by him and Euripides, *Bacchae*, ll. 330-350. A statue from Smyrna showing a markedly effeminate type of Dionysos is to be seen at the Ashmolean Museum.

to the classic poets Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides, that Dionysos and Apollo were different forms of the same god, a theory which is expressly confirmed by Plutarch<sup>1</sup>. But Apollo "the Far-Darter" was always to the Greeks a sun-god, and Horus from the first had the same character among the Egyptians, the emblem of the sun-disk being often added to the Horus-hawk of their protocol by the Pharaohs of the New Empire. Thus the identification of the gods of the Osiris cycle with their Greek analogues was complete. It was agreed that Osiris was to be represented as the Greek Hades, Isis as Demeter, and the child Horus as Apollo. Herodotus and probably other Greek writers had long before made the same identifications<sup>2</sup>.

This settled, the question of the material forms under which the triad was to be worshipped by Ptolemy's new subjects became easy. A convenient dream, so runs the story told in Roman times, revealed to the king the existence of a statue of Hades or Pluto at Sinope in Pontus that was exactly fitted to his purpose<sup>3</sup>. It is said to have been of colossal size, the work of Bryaxis, the fellow-worker of Scopas, and to have been composed of a mixture of the most precious metals with fragments of gems, the whole being coloured with a dark varnish. This statue was given up by—or according to another version was stolen from—the city of Sinope, and was installed with great pomp in the magnificent temple or Serapeum built for it at Alexandria, which for centuries formed one of the wonders of

<sup>1</sup> Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, lib. i. c. 18, for authorities; also Pindar, *Threnoi*, x. 8, p. 116 (Bergk); Plutarch, *On the E at Delphi*, c. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Lafaye, *Culte des Divinités d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1884, pp. 6–12, and authorities there quoted. Cf. Foucart, *Culte de Dion*, pp. 66, 67.

<sup>3</sup> So Plutarch and Tacitus where before quoted. The conflicting traditions on the subject have been reconciled by Krall, *Tacitus und der Orient*, Th. i. Bd iv. 83, 84. Cf. Bouché-Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divination*, t. iii. p. 378, n. 1; *id. Hist. de Lagides*, t. i. p. 118; Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. pp. 16, 17. There is little doubt that the statue of Bryaxis represented Asklepios as Bouché-Leclercq (*Rev. Hist. Rel.* 1902, pp. 26, 27) surmises. Isidore Lévy sums up the whole question in the *Revue* last quoted, 1911, pp. 146, 147, and 1913, pp. 308 *sqq.* So Ad. Reinach, *Rev. cit.* pt 2, p. 69. The statue is described by Rufinus Aquilensis, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk ii. c. 23. Cf. Dionysius, *Periegetes*, ll. 254, 256 (Didot, *Geogr. Gr. mi.* t. ii. p. 116); Amelung, *Rev. Archéol.* 1903, pt 2, pp. 187–204.

the Hellenistic world. It doubtless formed the model for all the later representations of the new god called henceforth Serapis (in Egyptian, Asar-hapi or Osiris in his manifestation as Apis), which resemble each other in all important particulars. They show a bearded man of mature age, whose features have much of the majesty and dignity of the Phidian Zeus. On his head he wears the *modius*, a crown of basket-work on which are sometimes represented olive trees and which is said to be a reproduction of the *calathos* or consecrated basket carried in the sacred procession to Eleusis, and doubtless possessed for the initiated some mystical or symbolical meaning<sup>1</sup>. He is generally represented with an eagle at his feet, and by the side of him appears a triple monster which may perhaps represent the classical Cerberus with a serpent twisted round its body and equipped with the heads of a lion, a dog, and a wolf. It seems, therefore, that in choosing this statue the founders of the Alexandrian religion had quite turned their backs on the lighter and more joyous aspects of the mystic Dionysos, and intended to regard him as the god of the dead merely<sup>2</sup>. The same was not the case with his consort Isis, who is generally represented as a young matron of stately appearance having sometimes the crescent moon on her head, and sometimes a crown of lotus flowers interspersed with ears of corn. She is dressed in a fringed tunic reaching to her feet, having over her shoulders a mantle tied by its ends between the breasts in a peculiar knot. In one hand she bears the *sistrum* or rattle used in her worship, and in the other a horn of abundance or other emblem, while the head is frequently covered by a long veil. Both the attitude and the dress are always of the strictest modesty, and the features wear an expression of gentle

<sup>1</sup> Probably it had some reference to his character as god of vegetation, as shown by his epithet of "Frugifer." The explanation of Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. c. 20, which refers it to the sun, is absurd. Perhaps it may be connected with his epithet of *πολυδέγμων* "receiver of many." So ÆL. Aristides speaks of him as the receiver of souls. See p. 60 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See last note. The eagle was adopted as a kind of family crest by the Ptolemies and appears on all their coins. See examples in Mahaffy, *Emp. of the Ptolemies*, *passim*. What is probably a reproduction of Bryaxis' statue is now at Naples and is described by Lafaye, *op. cit.* p. 274.

benevolence, in which it is possible to see a trace of melancholy. The Alexandrian Horus is seldom represented otherwise than in child form, the type being taken from the Egyptian Horus known as Har-pa-khrat (Horus the Child) of which the Alexandrians made Harpocrates. In this form he was represented with his finger in his mouth in accordance with the usual Egyptian ideogram for childhood, and this gave rise to the story among the Greeks that he was the god of silence. Sometimes he is shown with wings like the classical Eros, frequently seated on the lotus or with the lotus flower on his head, and very often with the hawk which formed his proper emblem<sup>1</sup>. He was seldom represented in a group containing Serapis, although bas-reliefs and statues showing Serapis and Isis together are common; but groups representing Isis suckling Horus have been found in some numbers. Generally it may be said that the *modius* on the head is the distinguishing mark of the figure of Serapis, the peculiar breast-knot that of Isis, while Horus can seldom be recognized with certainty save by the gesture of the forefinger in the mouth or, as the Greek artists preferred to represent it, on the lips. From this time forward, the Alexandrian Greeks could worship the chief deities of their native fellow-citizens under forms which they felt to be worthy of the Divine.

Thus, the worship of the great Egyptian triad under their Greek forms was inaugurated, as was our own English Reformation in the sixteenth century, as a measure of statecraft, by a king who hardly cared to conceal that in doing so he had only his own interest to serve. Yet it may be said at once, that so far as its political purpose was concerned, the Alexandrian religion was from the outset foredoomed to failure. The Egyptians of Philhellenic times were of all the nations of the earth at once the most superstitious and the most fanatically attached to their traditional modes of worship. Although until the rise of the theocracy, the importation of foreign gods was not unknown, under the Ethiopians, the Persians, and Alexander, the Egyptians had not scrupled to sacrifice their nationality to their religion, and to accept a foreign governor

<sup>1</sup> See Lafaye, pp. 259, 260. Except in amulets, representations of Harpocrates are not very common. Cf. *P.S.B.A.* 1914, p. 92.

so long as the worship of their native gods under types that had been observed by them for more than four millenia remained untouched. How then could they be expected to recognize their native deities in forms beautified and dignified by Greek art indeed, but so foreign to all their traditional ideas that nothing distinctly Egyptian about them remained?

To this question there could be but one answer, and it is not extraordinary that the native Egyptians proved as recalcitrant to their new king's endeavour to unite them in a common worship with their Greek masters as the Jews did under the somewhat similar attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes. The Egyptian priests allowed Ptolemy to set up at Memphis, which had become since the ruin of Thebes the religious capital of the country, a Serapeum, doubtless modelled on that of Alexandria, by the side of the native temple established for the delectation of the living Apis and for the solemn burial of his predecessors: but they took care that it should be separated from the Egyptian Serapeum by a long avenue of sphinxes, and that no Greek prayers should ever be allowed to defile the purity of the native Egyptian sanctuary<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, Egypt, resembling in this perhaps all countries with strongly marked geographical characteristics, has exhibited through all ages a wonderful power of conquering her conquerors, or, in other words, of forcing her foreign rulers to accept the ideas that they found there, instead of adopting at their instance innovations on customs consecrated by centuries of usage. Hence the Ptolemies, as time went on, found it necessary to pay ever more and more attention to the native Egyptian religion, and Ptolemy V Epiphanes was crowned at Memphis, as is recorded on the Rosetta Stone, with all the religious ceremonies that made him in the eyes of the Egyptians the living Horus, son of the sun-god, the beloved of Ptah and the rest, as fully as any of the ancient Pharaohs<sup>2</sup>. All the Ptolemies, too, seem to have spent

<sup>1</sup> Maury in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Sept. 1855, p. 1073; Mariette, *Le Sérapéum de Memphis*, ed. Maspero, Paris, 1882, I. pp. 114, 115, 124.

<sup>2</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *Hist. des Lagides*, I. pp. 232, 233. Cf. Mahaffy, *Empire of Ptolemies*, pp. 204 sqq. The Egyptianizing tendencies of the later Ptolemies shown by the decrees of the priests on the Rosetta and

very considerable sums on the restoration and keeping-up of the temples in Egypt dedicated to such thoroughly native gods as Amon of Thebes and Horus of Edfu, besides those at Philae and elsewhere raised not to the Alexandrian but to the Egyptian Osiris and his cycle. What truth there is in the statement of Macrobius that Ptolemy Soter compelled by "tyranny" the Egyptians to take Serapis into their temples, it is impossible to say; but as his image in Greek form has never been found in any of them, it is plain that the priests must have found some way of evading the royal order, if it were really given<sup>1</sup>.

Ptolemy, however, was building better than he knew, and the hybrid cult which the provident old soldier had fashioned as an instrument of government turned out to be the first, and not the least successful, of the world-religions for which Alexander's conquests left clear the way. During the wars of the Diadochi, all the powers who at any time found themselves Ptolemy's pawns in the mighty war game then played on a board stretching from India to Thrace, thought to curry favour with their rich ally by giving countenance to his new religion. An association of Sarapiasts or worshippers of Serapis held their meetings in the Piraeus not long after the institution of the Alexandrian cult<sup>2</sup>; and before the death of Ptolemy Soter, a Serapeum was built in Athens over against the Acropolis itself<sup>3</sup>. Cyprus, Rhodes, Antioch, Smyrna, and Halicarnassus were not long in following suit, and before the end of the century several of the islands of the Ægean together with Boeotia, which was said by some to be the native country of Dionysos, had adopted the new worship. In the second century B.C., the temples of the Alexandrian gods were to be found in Delos, Tenedos, Thessaly, Macedonia and the Thracian Bosphorus in Europe, and in Ephesus, Cyzicus and Termessus among

Canopus Stones were first pointed out by Revillout in the *Revue Archéologique*, 1877, pp. 331 *sqq.* A new decree of the same kind under Epiphanes has been published by M. Daressy, *Recueil de Travaux* etc., 1911, pp. 1 *sqq.*

<sup>1</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* Bk I. c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Foucart, *Les Associations Religieuses*, p. 207, Inscr. 24; *C.I.G.* No. 120. The tablet is now in the British Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 35; Pausanias, Bk I. c. 18, 4.



other places in Asia Minor<sup>1</sup>. But their greatest triumph was awaiting them further west. Invited by Hiero II into Sicily, they were not long in working their way up the coast, and a hundred years before our era a temple to Serapis was in existence at Puteoli<sup>2</sup>. It was evidently no new foundation and had probably been built some fifty years earlier, at which date perhaps the first Isium at Pompeii was also in existence<sup>3</sup>. Somewhere about 80 B.C., the Alexandrian worship was introduced into Rome itself, and thereafter no action of the authorities was able to expel it<sup>4</sup>. Its temples were more than once thrown down by order of the consuls; but they were always rebuilt, and in 43 B.C., the aedile Marcus Volusius, who had been proscribed by the triumvirs, found the linen robe and the dog's head mask of a priest of Isis the most efficient disguise in which to escape Sulla's bravos<sup>5</sup>. Under the Empire, the temple of Isis in the Campus Martius became one of the fashionable resorts of the Roman youth; and, although Tiberius seized the occasion of a real or pretended scandal in connection with it to exile a large number of the faithful to Sardinia, his successors were themselves initiated into the faith; while under Nero the worship of the Alexandrian gods was formally recognized by the state<sup>6</sup>. From that time, it followed the Roman arms into every quarter of the ancient world, and its monuments have been found in Morocco, Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany, and the Danube provinces. Ridicule was as powerless to stop its march as persecution, and the satire of Juvenal and Martial had no more effect on it than the banter of the New Comedy, which was quick to observe that even in

<sup>1</sup> Lafaye, *op. cit.* pp. 35–38; *id.* *Dictionnaire des Antiquités* of Daremberg and Saglio, *s.v.* Isis; Drexler in Roscher's *Lexikon der Mythologie*, *s.v.* Isis, esp. p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Lafaye, *op. cit.* p. 40; *C.I.L.* I. 577.

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, see last note.

<sup>4</sup> Lafaye, *op. cit.* pp. 44 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Lafaye, *op. cit.* pp. 44–47. For the story of Marcus Volusius see Appian, *de Bello Civilis*, Bk IV. c. 6, § 47.

<sup>6</sup> Tibullus, *Elégiacs*, I. iii. 23; *ibid.* I. vii. 27; Ovid, *Am.* II. xiii. 7; *id. op. cit.* II. xiv. The story of the expulsion is told by Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. c. 3. Cf. Lafaye, *op. cit.* chap. III *passim*.

Menander's day the gilded youth of Athens swore "by Isis" or "by Horus<sup>1</sup>." Under the Antonines, it probably reached its apogee, when the Emperor Commodus appeared in the processions of the cult among the bearers of the sacred images, and few Romans seem to have been aware that the Alexandrian gods were not Roman from the beginning. Like Ptolemy's master, Ptolemy's gods might have boasted that they commanded the allegiance of the whole civilized world<sup>2</sup>.

The causes of this astonishing success must be looked for within the religion itself. No name has come down to us of any prophet or priest of the Alexandrian religion possessing a commanding personality like St Paul, Mohammed, Luther, or Calvin; and we must therefore conclude that it was its own intrinsic merits which thus commended it to so many widely-differing peoples<sup>3</sup>. Foremost among these was, it would seem, its extraordinary timeliness. Alexander's conquests had broken down the barriers that speech and race had set up between neighbouring peoples, and had at the same time united many hundreds of jealous and discordant states under a single head. In the many royal courts which had been set up as a result of the partition of Alexander's Empire, philosophers of every school were chanting the political advantages of an enlightened monarchy over the greedy scramble for place and power inseparable from democracy, and the doctrine was bound sooner or later to be applied to religion<sup>4</sup>. We have seen how far both Egyptians and Greeks had before then carried the practice of *theocrasia*, but the founders of the Alexandrian religion were not slow in pushing it to its only legitimate conclusion. Serapis, unlike the Greek Zeus, from the first declined to brook any partition of his empire over nature. "Wouldst thou know

<sup>1</sup> *Comicor. Graecor. Fragmenta* of Didot, pp. 517 and 629, and Lafaye, *op. cit.* p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Lafaye, *op. et loc. cit.* and especially p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> So Parisotti, *Ricerche sul culto de Iside e Serapide*, Roma, 1888, p. 52 *sqq.*; and Dill, *Nero to Marcus*, pp. 564, 565: "The history of the Isiac cult at Rome from Sulla to Nero is really the history of a great popular religious movement....."

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter I, *supra*, pp. 12, 14. Cf. Droysen, *op. cit.* II. p. 471.

what god I am," said his oracle at the Alexandrian Serapeum to Nicocreon, the Cypriote king. "I myself will tell thee. The heavenly cosmos is my head; the sea my belly. My feet are the earth; my ears are in the aether. My far-beaming eye is the radiant light of the sun<sup>1</sup>." In other words, Serapis is himself the universe, which is probably the meaning to be attached to the name given to Osiris in the *Book of the Dead* which Egyptologists translate "Lord of Totality." But Aeschylus had already said the same thing about Zeus<sup>2</sup>, and as the gods of the Greeks were never anything else than the powers of nature, Serapis thus comprised in his single person the whole Greek pantheon. Hence "Serapis alone is Zeus" came to be a sort of watchword in the Alexandrian religion to be endlessly repeated on statues, gems, and all the other material relics of the cult<sup>3</sup>. A little later and we find Serapis drawing to himself the worship of all the Mediterranean gods who had a common origin with Osiris and Dionysos. Adonis, as appears from the beautiful idyll of Theocritus, in the reign of Ptolemy Soter's successor was worshipped as another form of Osiris in the royal palace itself<sup>4</sup>. Atys, Cybele's lover, was also identified with him<sup>5</sup>; and, as the Stoic philosophy, which taught that all the gods were but different forms of the one Divine energy,

<sup>1</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* Bk i. c. 20. Bouché-Leclercq (*R.H.R.* 1902, t. XLVI. p. 19, n. 1) says these lines are a forgery of late date. Krall, *Tacitus*, etc. Th. i, Bk iv., is of the contrary opinion. Nicocreon of Cyprus was certainly a contemporary of Ptolemy Soter, and helped him against Perdiccas.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk v. c. 14. So Ælius Aristides, in *Serapidem*, p. 91 (Dindorf), says that Serapis "is present in all things and fills the universe."

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc., pp. 306, 307, 324, 325, for examples. Cf. Inscription from Kios in Bithynia given by Robiou in *Mélanges Graux*, Paris, 1884, pp. 601, 602; Parisotti, *op. cit.* p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Theocritus, *Idyll*, xv.; Damascius, *Vit. Isidor.* 106; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk III. c. 23. In *Le Culte d'Adonis-Thammuz*, Paris, 1901 (pp. 51-54, 69, 109), M. Ch. Vellay has shown the fusion in early Christian times of the legends of Adonis, Atys and Osiris.

<sup>5</sup> Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Part IV, p. 357 and n. 1; cf. Stephen of Byzantium, *s.v.* Ἀπαθούς; Döllinger, *Jud. und Heid.* I. p. 145; Decharme in Daremberg and Saglio, *s.v.* Cybele for authorities.

came into fashion, Serapis was equated with the numerous sun-gods whose worship poured in from the Semitic east. "The eternal sun" came to be one of his most-used epithets, and he is often invoked as the equivalent of the Greek Helios and of the Persian sun-god Mithras<sup>1</sup>. Nor did his consort long remain behind him. "I, the parent of the works of nature" is the style in which Isis announces herself to her votary Lucius in Apuleius' romance,

"queen of all the elements, earliest offspring of the ages, highest of godheads, sovereign of the Manes, first of the heavenly ones, one-formed type of gods and goddesses. The luminous heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, the sad silences of the lower world, I govern by my nod. I am she whose godhead, single in essence, but of many forms, with varied rites and under many names, the whole earth reveres. Hence the Phrygians, first born of men, call me Pessinuntica, Mother of the Gods; here the first inhabitants of Attica, Cecropian Minerva, there the wave-rocked Cypriotes, Paphian Venus; the arrow-bearing Cretans, Diana Dictynna; the three-tongued Sicilians, Stygian Proserpine; the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres;—others Juno, others Bellona, these Hecate, those Rhamnusia; and they who are lighted by the first rays of the sun-god on his rising, the Ethiopians, the Africans, and the Egyptians skilled in the ancient teaching, worshipping me with ceremonies peculiarly my own, call me by my true name, Queen Isis<sup>2</sup>."

As we shall see later (p. 64, *infra*) her spouse Osiris claimed also to be the highest of godheads; and the final unity of the Divine essence to which the *μυστικὴ θεοκρασία* was logically bound to lead could hardly be stated in clearer language<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Julian, *ad Reg. Sol.* Orat. iv. cc. 135, 136; Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* Bk III. c. 15; Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in British Museum*, 1893, p. 65; Wessely, *Griechische Zauberpapyri von Paris*, etc., Wien, 1888, pp. 61 *sqq.*; Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Mus. Ant. Pub. Lugduni-Batavi*, Leyden, 1885, II. pp. 26, 27; Parthey, *Zwei griech. Zauberpapyri*, Berlin, 1866, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, Bk XI. c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> So Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Oxford, 1895, I. p. 92, says that "the essential idea" of the mysteries was that all the gods there worshipped were but different forms of the one. In the "Greek Worship of Serapis and Isis," I have endeavoured to show how this idea was elaborated in the cult of the Alexandrian divinities.

Thus, we see that what has been called a monotheistic pantheism instead of an incoherent mass of local worships was one of the advantages of the Alexandrian cult. But in the religion of the crowd, feeling plays a more important part than reason, and the idea which it first gave mankind of what would be now called the "fatherhood of God" was probably by far its most alluring feature. It has frequently been said that the Greeks although they feared, did not love their gods, and so far as the Homeric deities are concerned, it is difficult to see why they should. Apollo openly expresses his contempt for "pitiful mortals, who like unto leaves now live in glowing life, consuming the fruit of the earth, and now again pine unto death<sup>1</sup>," Hera does not hide her scorn for "the creatures of a day," and the help that Athena gives the Greeks in their war against Troy is expressly said to be due to no kindlier feeling than rage at the slight which Paris had put upon her beauty<sup>2</sup>. As for the Egyptian religion, if it ever exhibited the lofty conceptions and sublime ideas with which the earlier Egyptologists were inclined to credit it, it had long before Ptolemy's time lost all trace of them, and had degenerated into "a systematized sorcery" in which the gods were compelled to grant merely material benefits directly they were demanded with the proper ritual<sup>3</sup>. But when we turn from the Greek and Egyptian creeds to the new faith which was compounded from the two, we are at once struck by the complete change which seems to have come over the worshippers' conception of the Divine. Isis, from the wily magician of Pharaonic Egypt, has now become "the haven of peace and the altar of pity<sup>4</sup>."

"O thou holy and eternal protectress of the race of men" are the terms with which Lucius addresses her,  
 "thou who ever givest good gifts to comfort-needing mortals, thou dost bestow upon the lot of the wretched the sweet affection of a

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, xxi. 462 (translation by Lang, Leaf and Myers).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Penelope's speech on the jealousy of the gods, *Odyssey*, xxiii. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce, *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia* (Gifford Lectures), Edin. 1902, p. 201; Naville, *The Old Egyptian Faith*, pp. 308, 309; Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* i. p. 163 and ii. p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk xi. c. 15.

mother. There is no day nor night nor smallest moment which is not occupied with thy good deeds. Thou dost protect mankind by sea and land, and scattering the storms of life dost stretch forth to them thy saving hand, with which thou dost even spin anew the hopelessly twisted web of the Fates, and dost temper the blasts of fortune and restrain the hostile courses of the stars<sup>1</sup>."

So Ælius Aristides in his encomium of Serapis written after having been saved from shipwreck, as he considered, by the direct intervention of the god, tells us that Serapis is the god who "purifies the soul with wisdom, and preserves the body by giving it health<sup>2</sup>," that he alone

"is adored by kings as by private persons, by the wise as by the foolish, by the great as by the small, and by those on whom he has bestowed happiness as well as those who possess him alone as a refuge from their trouble<sup>3</sup>,"

that he is "the protector and saviour of all men<sup>4</sup>," "the most loving of the gods towards men<sup>5</sup>," "greatly turned towards mercy<sup>6</sup>," and "the light common to all men<sup>7</sup>." We hardly want his elaborate demonstration that Serapis alone of all the gods is ready to assist him who invokes him when in need, to convince us that the reign of the warlike gods and goddesses of Homer—always, as Renan says, brandishing a spear from the top of an acropolis—is over, and that instead of them man has at last found

....."Gods, the friends of man  
Merciful gods, compassionate"

who would certainly "answer him again," as a father would his children.

The providence and beneficence of the Alexandrian gods towards man, moreover, extended beyond the grave. In Homer, we find a conception of the next world which for dreariness and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Aristides, in *Serapid.* p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* loc. cit.

hopelessness is only paralleled by the Jewish ideas concerning Sheol. "Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, great Odysseus," says the shade of Achilles to the hero who has called him up from Hades. "Rather would I live upon the soil as the hireling of another, even with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the dead who are no more<sup>1</sup>." But the Eleusinian Mysteries were hailed as giving deliverance from these horrors, and as robbing death of much of its terrors for those who had been initiated. "Blessed is he," says Pindar in a passage in which commentators agree to see a direct allusion to the Mysteries, "who has seen the things that are under the earth. He has seen the end of life; he has seen also the God-sent beginning<sup>2</sup>." "Thrice blessed," says Sophocles, "are they among mortals, who after having beheld these mysteries, go to the house of Hades: for it is theirs alone there to live, but to the others there will arrive all ills<sup>3</sup>." The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, which may be about a century earlier than Pindar, is as emphatic as he as to the saving grace of initiation. "Happy," it says, "is the man on earth who has seen these things. But he who has not been initiated in these holy rites, who has not shared in them, never has the same lot, when he has utterly faded away in the dark gloom<sup>4</sup>." Those who believe with M. Foucart in the Egyptian origin of the Eleusinian rites will doubtless see in this a direct borrowing from the Egyptian views regarding the beatitude awaiting the justified or "triumphant" dead who in life had been worshippers of Osiris. How much or how little of the Osirian faith as to the state of these worshippers in the next world passed into the Alexandrian religion cannot now be said; but it is certain that the protection of Isis and Serapis was held to be as powerful in the life beyond the tomb as in this.

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, xi. 491 sqq. (Butcher and Lang's translation).

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Threnoi*, Frag. x. p. 102, Cod. Bō.

<sup>3</sup> Sophocles, *Triptolemus* (Plutarch, *de Audiendis Poetis*, 21 f), Frag. 348 of Didot.

<sup>4</sup> Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, ll. 480 sqq. So an inscription on the statue of a hierophant quoted by M. Foucart, *Myst. d'El.* p. 55, says that death to the initiated is not an evil but a good.

“When the term of thy life is spent,”

says the apparition of the goddess to Apuleius’ Lucius,

“and thou at length descendest to the lower regions, there also, even in the subterranean hemisphere, thou, dwelling in Elysian fields, will often adore me who art propitious to thee, and whom thou shalt see shining among the shades of Acheron and reigning over the secret places of Styx<sup>1</sup>.”

So, too, Aristides says of Serapis, that he is “the Saviour and leader of souls, leading souls to the light and receiving them again<sup>2</sup>,” that “he raises the dead, he shows forth the longed-for light of the sun to those who *see*, whose holy tombs contain endless numbers of sacred books<sup>3</sup>,” and that “we can never escape from his sway, but he will save us, and even after death we shall be the objects of his providence<sup>4</sup>.” We may imagine, if we please, although there is really no proof of any connection between the two, that in its assertion of the fatherhood of God as in earthly matters, the Alexandrian religion owed something to the Stoic philosophy; but it is fairly certain that in the glimpses it afforded of the next world, its inspiration must have been drawn either from Eleusis or from Egypt.

What we know, too, of the actual worship of the Alexandrian triad shows that it was designed to attract the devotion of the multitude with a skill that argues the existence behind it of many centuries of priestcraft. It is still a moot point whether Herodotus was well-founded when he asserted the existence of “mysteries” in the Egyptian religion<sup>5</sup>; and it is quite clear that the scenes in the earthly life of Osiris and the gods of his cycle which in the case of their Greek counterparts were carefully concealed from all but initiates, were in Egypt openly

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk XI. c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Aristides, in *Serapid.* p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Maspero says (“Les Hypogées Royaux de Thebes,” *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 178) that “if ever there were in Pharaonic Egypt mysteries and initiates, as there were in Greece and Greek Egypt,” it was in the time of decay evidenced by the rare books preserved in the tombs of the kings of the xxth and later Dynasties. Later, *ibid.* p. 180, he says that they must have been confined to a very small class. Cf. *ibid.* p. 278.



portrayed on the walls of the temples<sup>1</sup>. But Timotheos and Manetho must have been too well aware of the prestige attaching throughout the Hellenic world to the secret worships of such centres of religion as Eleusis and Samothrace to forgo its advantage for their new religion ; and the Alexandrian gods too had a system of initiation which seems to have been modelled upon that of the "Goddesses Twain." Thanks to Apuleius we can, up to a certain point, follow the Alexandrian course of initiation step by step. Those whom Isis singled out as fitted for her service<sup>2</sup>—which we may without uncharitableness interpret as meaning those whom the priests thought likely to be of use to the religion—were assigned a "mystagogue" who no doubt gave them such instructions as he thought fit in the meaning of the rites which he saw performed in the temple, and the incidents in the life of the gods to which they were attached. When after a course of such instruction, which was of varying length, the mystagogue was convinced of the soundness of the aspirant's vocation, the formal initiation began. In strict accordance with a ritual which Apuleius assures us was written down in Egyptian characters and carefully preserved in the secret places of the sanctuary (*opertis adyti*), the aspirant underwent a solemn lustration with water or baptism at the hands of the priest, and was ordered to abstain from all food which had had life, from wine and from the company of the other sex for a space of ten days<sup>3</sup>. This period was doubtless spent as far as possible within the temple precincts, much importance being attached to the prolonged contemplation of the statue of the goddess, which was, as we have seen, fashioned in a manner worthy of Greek art, and was further adorned with

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* the mystic marriage of Zeus or Dionysos with Demeter, which according to Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 1, § 8, p. 171, Cruice, and Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* c. II., formed the crowning scene of the Eleusinian Mysteries. At Dendera, the corresponding union of Osiris and Isis, from which, according to M. Foucart, the Eleusinian legend was derived, was depicted in the most realistic way on the temple walls. See Mariette, *Dendérah*, Paris, 1875, t. iv. pl. 65 *sqq.*, or Budge, *G.E.* pp. 132–137.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk XI. c. 21, *quæis tamen tuto possint magna religionis committi silentia, numen deæ soleat elicere.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* cc. 22, 23.

rich robes and jewels after the manner of the Catholic images of the Virgin. At the expiration of the ten days' retreat, the candidate was clothed in a linen garment and was exhibited to the general body or congregation of the faithful who presented him with gifts. The secret ceremonies were then performed before him, the nature of which are only revealed to us in the guarded words of Apuleius' hero :

"I approached the bounds of death, and, borne through all the elements, returned again to the threshold of Proserpine which I had already trod. I saw at midnight the sun shining with pure light, I came before the Gods of the Upper and Lower World, and I worshipped them from anigh<sup>1</sup>."

Collating these hints—which Apuleius tells us are all that it is lawful for him to give—with what we know of the origin of the Alexandrian religion and with the scraps of information that have come down to us regarding other ceremonies of a likenature, we may gather from this that the candidate underwent a mock death, being probably made to enact in his own person the passion of Osiris and his shutting-up in a coffin<sup>2</sup>, that he was shown the happy lot of the initiated and the correspondingly miserable fate of the uninitiated in the life after death, that he was subjected to certain " trials," or proofs of his courage and sincerity, by fire, water, earth, and air, and that he was finally shown in a brilliant light the glorious company of the gods represented either by their images, or by priests arrayed with their best-known attributes. Nothing seems to have been omitted that could impress the imagination of the neophyte, and when the night of initiation was at length over, he was again displayed before the congregation of worshippers clothed in what was known as the Olympian garment (*stola Olympiaca*) consisting of a dress of byssus or linen embroidered with flowers, over which was cast a rich mantle decorated with figures of fabulous animals, and bearing in his right hand a flaming torch,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* end of c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is the meaning of the formula said by Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* c. II., to be repeated by the initiates at Eleusis: "I have fasted...I have drunk of the cyceon...I have entered into the chest (*παστός*)."

while on his head was a crown of palm-leaves with leaves projecting, as he says, "like rays of light." In this costume he was placed in a wooden pulpit before the statue of the goddess in the public portion of the temple, and was thus exhibited for the adoration of the crowd, when the ceremony of opening took place<sup>1</sup>. As the last stage of the secret rite seems to have been the successive imposition upon the initiate of twelve robes, doubtless typifying the twelve signs of the Zodiac, we hardly want the rayed crown, and the explicit words of Apuleius to inform us that in this costume he was intended to represent the material sun (*exornatus instar Solis et in vicem simulacri constitutus*)<sup>2</sup>. The sun-god, however, was in the later phases of the Egyptian religion not Osiris but either Ra or Horus<sup>3</sup>, and this last-named god was in the Alexandrian triad equated with the Greek Apollo. It therefore seems likely that the initiate represented here the child of Isis begotten, as has been said, by Osiris after his death and passion, and this corresponds with the statement put into the mouth of Isis and preserved by Proclus: "I am that which has been, is, and will be. My garment none has lifted. The fruit which I bore has become the sun"<sup>4</sup>. It is significant that the later and especially the Christian writers speak of Osiris and not Horus as the son of Isis; but the distinction between father and son in the Egyptian triads was never sharply defined, and there are many signs that Horus, the son of Isis, was looked upon as Osiris re-born<sup>5</sup>.

The initiation strictly so-called was concluded with a banquet

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See last note.

<sup>3</sup> Ra was always the material sun; while Horus was probably in ancient times the god of the sky: Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* t. II. p. 229. With the Middle Empire the emblem of Ra began to be added to that of Horus as the "crest" of the Pharaoh's cognizance, showing that the king was himself regarded as the representative of a composite divinity, Horus-Ra. Cf. "Titles of Thinite Kings," *P.S.B.A.* 1908, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> Proclus, in *Timaeum Platonis*, I. 30 D. (Schneidewin).

<sup>5</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, c. XXI.; Arnobius, *adv. Gentes*, Bk I. c. 36; Athenagoras, *Presbeia*, c. XXII. Cf. also Griffith and Thompson, *Stories of High Priests of Memphis*, pp. 107, 121; Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 246, and especially p. 361; *P.S.B.A.* 1914, pp. 92, 93.

provided by the initiate in which he celebrated what he was henceforth to regard as his natal day, as his formal entry into the religion was considered by him as a re-birth. Nor was this all. Twelve months after his initiation into the first degree or Mysteries of Isis, Apuleius' hero is summoned to undergo a further initiation, this time into the mysteries "of the Great God and highest progenitor of the Gods, the unconquered Osiris (*magni dei deumque summi parentis, invicti Osiris*)," of which we are only told that a further preparation of ten days was necessary and that the aspirant was in addition "enlightened by the nocturnal orgies of the princely god Serapis (*insuper etiam Serapis principalis dei nocturnis orgiis illustratus*)<sup>1</sup>." Very shortly after this a *third* initiation was prescribed to Lucius and was backed up by a dream in which Osiris "the God of the great Gods, or rather the Highest of the Greater Gods and the Greatest of the Highest and the Ruler of the Greatest (*deus deum magnorum potior et majorum summus et summorum maximus et maximorum regnator Osiris*)" appears to him; but we learn nothing of the nature of this fresh initiation, save that it was preceded like the two others by a ten-days' fast<sup>2</sup>. No other text or monument that has yet come to light gives any hint as to the revelations made in these two last degrees or initiations; but it seems likely from the words above quoted that they were concerned with the true nature of Osiris<sup>3</sup>, and that he must have been finally proclaimed to the initiate as the one and only Source of Being. The apparent inconsistency between this and Isis' own statement given above that she is herself the "highest of godheads...first of the heavenly ones, one-formed type of

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk. XI. c. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ælius Aristides (*in Serapid.* p. 88) refuses to discuss this; but Athenagoras (see note 5 p. 63, *supra*) says that when the members of the body of Osiris were found, they were presented to Isis with the remark that they were the fruits of the vine Dionysus and that Semele was the vine itself. But see p. 65, *infra*. Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. LXXIX. says that "the priests of these days," meaning, as is evident from the context, the priests of the Alexandrian divinities, "try to conceal" the fact that Osiris rules over the dead. The old religion of Egypt never did; but perhaps this, too, was part of the secret teaching of the Alexandrian Mysteries.

gods and goddesses" can perhaps be got over by supposing that the Supreme Being was supposed to be at once the father and mother of the inferior gods, an idea of which there are many traces in the Egyptian myths of later Pharaonic times<sup>1</sup>. Some connection between Osiris in his Egyptian form and the Greek wine-god Bacchus may be implied by the dream which heralded the second initiation showing "one clothed in consecrated linen robes, and bearing thyrsi, ivy and certain things which I may not mention<sup>2</sup>"; but M. Baillet has found a bronze statue of the Ptolemaic period in which Osiris is represented with grapes and a vine-shoot<sup>3</sup>, and it is therefore unlikely that any identification of the kind formed part of the secrets reserved for initiates<sup>4</sup>.

This, therefore, seems to be all that can be usefully said about the secret part of the worship of the Alexandrian gods. But the founders of the cult must have always borne in mind that while in every religion there are a few devotees who are prepared to go all lengths in theology or enquiry into the nature of their gods, the majority are attracted to it more from a vague desire to enter into amicable relations with the spiritual world than from any other feeling. Even with the Mysteries of Eleusis, it is fairly certain that only a very small proportion of those who attended the ceremonies really grasped the full meaning of what they saw and heard. "Many are the thyrsus-bearers," quotes Plato in this connection, "but few are the mystes<sup>5</sup>"; and it is plain that, as the Telesterion at Eleusis could at the outside accommodate three thousand persons, the greater part of the huge crowd in the Iacchos procession must have come only to look on<sup>6</sup>. But even this more or less

<sup>1</sup> Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* II. pp. 254-255, 361, 446; *P.S.B.A.* 1914, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* c. 27.

<sup>3</sup> "Osiris-Bacchus" in *Ägypt. Zeitschr.* 1878, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> Unless we suppose that the statue was one of those used in the mysteries, see note 3 p. 64, *supra*. Plutarch, however, in his address to Klea makes no secret of the identification. See *de Is. et Os.* c. xxxv.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Phaedr.* in Abel's *Orphica*, Fragm. 228. Olympiodorus says that the verse comes from Orpheus.

<sup>6</sup> Dyer, *Gods in Greece*, p. 209. He thinks the crowd sometimes numbered 30,000, relying upon the story in Herodotus, Bk VIII. c. 65,

careless multitude did much to spread the fame of the Eleusinian religion, while it was doubtless from their ranks in the first instance that the true initiates were drawn. With this in view, the Alexandrian priests laid themselves out to cater for the half-convinced crowd as well as for their real devotees, and did so with a success which put the Eleusinian Mysteries entirely in the shade. In this, they were much helped by the practice of the native Egyptian temples in Pharaonic times which has been clearly set forth by M. Moret. Every day in every temple in Egypt there seems to have been a solemn Service of Opening when the statue of the god was taken from its resting-place, purified with incense, dressed, and anointed before the doors were opened, and the public, or perhaps only the king as representing mankind in general, were admitted to adore the god<sup>1</sup>. This practice was copied with great fidelity in the worship of the Alexandrian gods, and "the morning opening of the temple" (*templi matutinas apertiones*) became an elaborate ceremony in which the white curtains which hid the statue of Isis from the gaze of the worshippers were drawn back (*velis candentibus reductis*), and it was displayed blazing with actual robes, gems, and ornaments, like a Madonna in Southern Europe at the present day<sup>2</sup>. We also learn from Apuleius that prayers to the goddess were offered at the same time, while one of the priests made the circuit of the different altars within the temple, pouring before each of them a libation of Nile water, and "the beginning of the First Hour" was solemnly proclaimed, with chants and shouts which have been compared to the muezzin of the Mahomedans, but which more probably resembled the choral singing of a morning hymn by the assembled congregation<sup>3</sup>. We know also from a casual allusion in one of Martial's Epigrams, that the eighth hour was also celebrated by

of the Spartan who before the battle of Marathon heard the Iacchos-song sung "as if by 30,000 persons." Cf. Foucart, *Les Gds. Myst.* p. 136.

<sup>1</sup> Moret, *Le Culte Divin Journalier en Égypte*, Paris, 1902, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* c. 20. Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 136, gives the "trousseau" of a statue of Isis found in Spain including earrings, necklaces, etc.

<sup>3</sup> See the scene in the Herculaneum fresco described on p. 68, *infra*.

a chant of the priests, and it seems likely that this announced the closing of the temple to the profane, and was attended by similar solemnities to those of the opening<sup>1</sup>. But it is abundantly plain that between these hours the temple remained open for what may be called private worship, and that this took the form of meditation or silent adoration before the statue of Isis. Apuleius' Lucius repeatedly speaks of the pleasure that he derived even before his initiation from the prolonged contemplation of the goddess's image<sup>2</sup>, and the Roman poets are full of allusions to the devout who passed much of their time seated before her statue on benches, the place of which is clearly marked out in Isiac temples like that of Pompeii<sup>3</sup>. That such "meditations" were thought to have in them a saving grace is apparent from a passage in Ovid, where he tells us that he had seen one who had offended "the divinity of the linen-clad Isis" sitting before her altar<sup>4</sup>, and it also seems to have been part of the necessary preparation for those who sought initiation. When we consider that the Eleusinian festivals were celebrated at the most but twice a year, and then only in one part of Greece, we see how greatly the daily services and frequentation of the temples in nearly every large town in the West must have operated in drawing to the Alexandrian worship the devotion of the citizens.

In addition to these, however, there were far more elaborate ceremonies of which we obtain a passing glimpse. At Herculaneum, were found early in last century two mural frescoes portraying scenes in the worship of Isis, and of an Isis who, from the style of the paintings and the place where they were found, can be no other than the Alexandrian goddess. One of these, now in the Museum at Naples, shows a temple surrounded by trees, the porch of which is approached by a staircase and

<sup>1</sup> Martial, Bk x. Epig. 48. Apuleius, *Met.* c. 17, describes the ceremonies which included a solemn dismissal of the people, and the kissing by them of the feet of a silver statue of the goddess.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* c. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. pp. 118, 119, and Plate facing p. 192. Cf. Ovid, Propertius and Tibullus, where quoted by Lafaye, *op. cit.* p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, *Pontic. Epist.* Bk i. Ep. 1, v. 51.

is guarded by two sphinxes<sup>1</sup>. Before the door and at the head of the stairs stands a priest with the shaven crown of the Alexandrian priesthood, holding with both hands an urn breast-high, while behind him are two others, one of whom (probably a woman) is completely clothed, wears long hair, and shakes a sistrum, while the other is naked to the waist and has his head shaved like the central figure. At the foot of the staircase is another priest bearing a sistrum in his left hand and a sort of pointed baton or hiltless sword in his right<sup>2</sup>, with which he seems to be commanding a body of persons of both sexes, who from the shaven crowns of the men are evidently a congregation or college of initiates, and are ranged in two rows upon the steps. In the foreground are three altars, the middle one with a fire burning on it, which an attendant is fanning, while on the right of this is a flute-player seated on the ground, having in front of him a priest with a wand like that before described in either hand, and on the left a man and a woman shaking sistra. The scene evidently represents a religious service of some kind, and this may possibly be, as M. Lafaye suggests, the Adoration of the Sacred Water or water of the Nile, which as Plutarch and Apuleius both hint, was considered the emblem of Osiris<sup>3</sup>. If so, we may further suppose that the initiates are here singing antiphonally, or in two choirs, the hymn to Serapis, a particular air on the flute being, as we shall see, sacred to that god. The other fresco shows a temple porch like its fellow, although the steps leading up to it are fewer in number and the two sphinxes on either side of the opening are here replaced by two Doric pillars ornamented with garlands. The central figure is a bearded man of black complexion,

<sup>1</sup> The Baron von Bissing thinks this is a copy of the Serapeum of Alexandria. See *Transactions of the Third International Congress of Religions*, Oxford, 1908, I. pp. 225 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Is this the *bacchos* or short rod carried by the faithful in the Iacchos-procession at Eleusis? See Scholiast in *Knights* of Aristophanes, l. 408 (p. 48 of Didot).

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus puts it quite plainly: "Now Osiris is water." See *Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 7, p. 149, Cruice. Cf. Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 115. So Origen, c. *Cels.* Bk v. c. 38, says that the fables of Osiris and Isis lead men to worship cold water and the moon.



crowned with the lotus and a chaplet of leaves. One hand rests on his hip, and the other is raised in the air, which attitude, perhaps from its likeness to that of the statue known as the Dancing Faun, has given rise to the idea that it is a sacred dance which is here represented<sup>1</sup>. Behind this figure are two women, one of whom plays a tympanum or tambourine, two children, and a priest or initiate with shaven crown, sistrum in hand, and naked to the waist. In the foreground is the altar seen in the other fresco, with a flame rising from it, and standing to the right of it a priest with a sistrum and another musical instrument in his hands, a flute-player, a child, a kneeling man, a woman clothed in a long garment and bearing, besides the sistrum, a palm-branch, and other worshippers. On the left is a priest with a sistrum, a child bearing in one hand a basket and in the other a small urn, while a woman crowned with leaves, with a sistrum and a dish filled with fruits, kneels at the head of the steps. From the black complexion of the principal figure, M. Lafaye considers that he may represent Osiris himself and that he is here shown at the moment of resurrection, a scene which he considers, not without reason, may have formed the concluding act in one of the sacred dramas or mystery-plays undoubtedly associated with the worship of the god. If so, it is unlikely that it formed part of the initiation into the Mysteries, the particulars of which were carefully concealed from the profane and would hardly have been painted on the walls of temples or dwelling-houses. It seems more probable that the scene in question, whatever be its meaning, was acted in pantomime in, or rather before, the temple at a particular period of the year, that the uninitiated were allowed to be present at it as well as at the Adoration of the Sacred Water, and that these two therefore were familiar and attractive objects to the populace throughout the Roman world.

That the Passion—as it was distinctly called—and Resurrection of Osiris were yearly and openly celebrated by the worshippers of the Alexandrian gods with alternate demonstrations of grief and joy, the classical poets have put beyond

<sup>1</sup> von Bissing in the paper quoted in note 1 p. 68, *supra*, suggests that this is the dance of the god Bes.

doubt. The celebration took place in the month of November and began with a ten-day fast on the part of all the faithful which was often spent in the temples. Then followed the representation of the passion of and the seeking for Osiris, and its result, which a Christian writer of the III<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>1</sup> thus sums up :

“ You behold the swallow<sup>2</sup> and the cymbal of Isis, and the tomb of your Serapis or Osiris empty, with his limbs scattered about... Isis bewails, laments and seeks after her lost son<sup>3</sup>, with her Cynocephalus<sup>4</sup> and her bald-headed priests ; and the wretched worshippers of Isis beat their breasts, and imitate the grief of the most unhappy mother. By and by, when the little boy is found, Isis rejoices, and the priests exult. Cynocephalus the discoverer boasts, and they do not cease year by year either to lose what they find, or to find what they lose.”

“ These,” he says, “ were formerly Egyptian rites, and now are Roman ones ” ; and it is plain that all the incidents of which he speaks were perfectly familiar to the Roman people. Juvenal<sup>5</sup> speaks of the bald-headed multitude uttering lamentations and running to and fro, and of their exultant cries when Osiris is found ; and the banquets in the temples and great festivals and public games which celebrated the “ Finding of Osiris ” when the Alexandrian worship was recognized by the state must have made the recurrence of this chief festival of the Alexandrian religion familiar to every one<sup>6</sup>.

How many lesser festivals than these formed part of its public ceremonial we do not know, but they were probably numerous enough. The Roman calendars tell us of a festival of Isis Pharia, probably in her capacity of tutelary goddess of

<sup>1</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, c. 21.

<sup>2</sup> The swallow refers to the story that Isis changed herself into a swallow who flitted round the pillar containing the coffin of Osiris. Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. XVI.

<sup>3</sup> Evidently a confusion between Horus and Osiris which would have been impossible had not the Isiacists looked upon Horus as Osiris re-born. Cf. Lactantius, *Institutes*, Bk I. c. 21, where the same confusion occurs; *P.S.B.A.* 1914, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> The “ dog-headed ” Anubis.

<sup>5</sup> Juvenal, *Satir.* VI. l. 533 ; *ibid.* VIII. l. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 128.

Alexandria, and of another of Serapis, both in the month of April, while Plutarch speaks of the Birth of Horus celebrated, as was natural with a sun-god, after the vernal equinox, when nature awakens and the sun begins to show forth his power. But there was another spring festival which took place on the 5th of March<sup>1</sup> to mark the reopening of navigation and commerce after the departure of winter, in which the faithful went in procession to the sea (or probably in its absence to the nearest water), and there set afloat a new ship filled with offerings which was known as the vessel of Isis. Apuleius has left us a description of this festival at once so lively and so imbued with the spirit of the devout Isiacist, that it may be pardonable to quote from it at some length. The procession, which in the case he is describing sets forth at dawn from the gates of Cenchree the eastern port of Corinth, is heralded by a carnival in which burlesque representations of magistrates, gladiators, hunters, and fishermen jostle with caricatures of ancient Greek heroes and demigods like Bellerophon and Ganymede. After this had dispersed, "the procession proper of the Saviour Goddess," he says, set itself in motion, and may be described in his own words<sup>2</sup>:

"Women shining in white garments displayed their joy by divers gestures, and crowned with spring blossoms strewed from their laps flowers upon the road over which marched the holy throng. Others, with glittering mirrors held behind them, showed to the advancing Goddess their ready service. Others, who bore ivory combs, by the motion of their arms and the twining of their fingers represented the combing of her royal hair, while yet others sprinkled the ways with drops of sweet-smelling balsam and other unguents. A great crowd also of both sexes followed with lamps, torches, candles and other kinds of lights making propitious with light the source of the heavenly stars. Thereafter came gentle harmonies, and reeds and flutes sounded with sweetest modulations. A graceful choir of chosen youths followed, shining in snowy dresses of ceremony and singing a beautiful hymn which by grace of the Muses a skilful poet had set to music, although its theme recalled the prayers of our forefathers.

<sup>1</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* cc. 9, 10, 11.

Then came flute-players consecrated to the great Serapis, who on the slanted reed held under the right ear, repeated the air usual in the temple of the God, in order that everyone might be warned to make room for the passage of the holy things. Then pressed on the multitude of those who had been initiated into the divine mysteries, both men and women of every rank and age, shining in the pure whiteness of their linen robes, the women with hair moist with perfume and covered with a transparent veil, the men with closely shaven hair and glistening heads. Earthly stars of the great religion were these, who made a shrill tinkling with brazen silver or even gold sistra. Then came the priests of the holy things, those distinguished men who, tightly swathed in white linen from the breast-girdle to the feet, displayed to view the noble emblems of the most mighty God. The first held forth a lamp shining with clear light, not exactly resembling those which give light to nocturnal banquets, but in the form of a golden boat and emitting a broader flame through its central opening. The second, clothed in the same way as the first, carried in his two hands the little altars, *i.e.* the *auxilia* to which the helping foresight of the high Goddess has given a peculiar name. The third bore a palm-tree with tiny golden leaves, and likewise the *caduceus* of Mercury. The fourth exhibited the emblem of Equity, a left hand represented with outstretched palm, which from its inborn disinclination to work, and as being endowed with neither skill nor expertness, seems better suited to typify Equity than the right. He also bore a golden vase in the rounded shape of a female breast, from which he poured libations of milk. The fifth carried a winnowing-fan composed of golden wires, and yet another an amphora.

“Without interval, the Gods who have deigned to walk with the feet of men go forward. Here—dread sight!—is he who is the messenger between the supernal and the infernal deities. Upright, of a complexion black in some parts, golden in others, Anubis raises on high his dog’s head, bearing in his left hand the *caduceus*, and shaking in his right the budding palm-branch<sup>1</sup>. Close upon his footsteps, follows a cow, held on high in an erect posture—the cow, fertile image of the Goddess who brings forth all things—which one of the blessed ministry with pantomimic steps bears seated on his shoulders. The chest containing the mysteries was carried by

<sup>1</sup> Is this the “golden bough” of initiation? Cf. Baillet, “Osiris-Bacchus,” cited p. 65, *supra*.

another, thus wholly concealing the hidden things of the sublime religion<sup>1</sup>. Yet another bore within his happy bosom the revered likeness of the Supreme Divinity, resembling neither a domestic animal, nor bird, nor wild beast, nor even man himself; but yet to be revered in the highest degree alike for its skilful invention, and for its very novelty, and also as that unspeakable evidence of the religion which should be veiled in complete silence. As to its outward form, it was fashioned in glittering gold—an urn hollowed out with perfected art with a round base and carved externally with the marvellous images of the Egyptians. Its mouth was not much raised and jutted forth in an extended spout with a wide stream; while on the opposite side was attached the handle bent far out with a wide sweep, on which sate an asp in wreathed folds uplifting the swollen stripes of his scaly neck.”

This description will leave little doubt on the mind of the reader as to the supreme importance in the religion of the urn which is being held up for the adoration of the faithful in the fresco from Herculaneum before described; and this is borne out by a bas-relief in the Vatican in which a similar urn to that described by Apuleius is represented as being carried in procession<sup>2</sup>. “They say,” says Hippolytus speaking of the worshippers of Isis, “that Osiris is water,” and Celsus, according to Origen, confirms him in this<sup>3</sup>. According to this last, Isis represented the earth, and the doctrine may therefore be an allegory representing the fertilization of the land by the Nile. It is more likely, however, that it is to be attributed to one of the older cosmogonies current in Egypt, wherein water, personified by the god Nu, is the origin of everything<sup>4</sup>. The main

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *pudendum* of Osiris. See Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 7, p. 149, Cruice; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk v. c. 16; Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. II., says the Corybantes did the same thing with that of Bacchus.

<sup>2</sup> Lafaye in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq. s.v.* Isis.

<sup>3</sup> See note 3 p. 68, *supra*. Cf. Leemans, *Papyri Gr.* pp. 26, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 345, says this Nu was “neither the primordial water, nor the sky, but a very ancient god, common to all humanity,” whom he compares to the Thian of the Chinese, the Dyaus of the pre-Vedic, and the Uranos-Oceanos of the pre-Hellenic peoples. “At the beginning,” he continues, “he is himself the Celestial Ocean.”

point to note for our present purpose is that an urn or vase containing liquid, was, in the public ceremonies of the Alexandrian religion, the recognized symbol of the Supreme Being.

Apuleius next describes the procession as having reached the seashore where the images of the gods were arranged in order <sup>1</sup>:

“Then the Chief Priest, pouring forth with chaste mouth the most solemn prayers, consecrated and dedicated to the goddess, after having thoroughly purified it with a lighted torch, an egg, and some sulphur, a ship made with the highest art and painted all over with the wonderful pictures of the Egyptians. The shining sail of this blessed bark had the words of a prayer woven in it; and these words reiterated the petition that the navigation then commencing might be prosperous. And now the mast was stepped, a round piece of pine, lofty and smooth, and conspicuous from the handsome appearance of its truck, and the poop with its twisted goose-neck shone covered with gold-leaf, while the whole hulk was gay with polished citron wood. Then all the people, both the religious and the profane, heaped emulously together winnowing-fans laden with spices and such like offerings, and poured upon them crumbled cakes made with milk, until the ship, filled with magnificent gifts offered in fulfilment of vows, was loosed from its moorings and put to sea with a gentle breeze that seemed to spring up on purpose. After her course became indistinct to us by reason of the distance that she was from our eyes, the bearers of the holy things again took up each his own load, and joyfully returned to the fane in the same solemn procession as before. But when we arrived at the temple, the Chief Priest and the bearers of the divine effigies, and those who have been already initiated into the ever to be revered secrets, entering into the chamber of the Goddess put away the breathing images with due ceremony. Then one of them, whom men call the Scribe, standing before the doors and having called together as if for a discourse the company of the Pastophori<sup>2</sup>—which is the name of this sacrosanct college—forthwith recited from a lofty pulpit prayers written in a book for the Great Prince, the Senate, the Equestrian Order, and the whole Roman people, their sailors and

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk XI. c. 16.

<sup>2</sup> The bearers of the sacred Pastos (box or coffin?). He says elsewhere that this particular college dated from “the days of Sulla,” i.e. 87–84 B.C.

ships, and all who are under the sway of our native land, and then closed the address according to the Greek rite thus: 'Let the people depart<sup>1</sup>.' Which announcement was followed by a shout of the people showing that it was favourably received by all. Then the multitude, rejoicing exceedingly and bearing olive-branches, laurel-twigs, and chaplets, after having kissed the feet of a statue of the goddess fashioned in silver which stood on steps [within the porch?], departed to their own homes."

What most strikes one in this account by an eye-witness, which must have been written about the year 170 A.D., is the entirely modern tone of it all. In the scene that passes under Lucius' eyes, there is hardly anything that might not be seen at an Italian *festa* at the present day. The joyous crowd, respectful rather than devout, and not above introducing a comic or rather a burlesque element into the day's rejoicing, the images and sacred vessels carried solemnly along, the crowd of tonsured priests, and the chants and hymns sung in chorus, the return to the temple, with its prayers for Church and State, and its dismissal of the people—all these are paralleled every day in countries where the Catholic Church is still dominant. Not less modern, too, is the way in which Lucius alludes to the faith of which all these things illustrate the power. For him, there is no other god than Isis—"thou who art all<sup>2</sup>," as one of her votaries calls her on his tombstone, in whom "single in essence, though with many names<sup>3</sup>," all other gods are contained. Hence, he can think of no other religion than her worship. It is always with him "the holy" or "the sublime religion," and the goddess is she whom the whole earth adores. It is she in whom one can trust not only for happiness beyond the tomb, but for present help in all the troubles of this life, and to devote oneself to her service, to thoroughly learn, to understand her nature, is the proudest lot which can befall man while upon earth. Hence all her initiates were "earthly stars," her priests were all happy or blessed in that they were allowed to be near

<sup>1</sup> The reading has been contested, but is well established. Cf. the concluding words of the Mass: "Ite, missa est."

<sup>2</sup> "*Una quae es omnia*," C.I.N. 3580. The stone was found at Capua.

<sup>3</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* Bk XI. c. 5.

and even to carry and handle the divine images, and the religion was a real bond which united people of all ranks and ages. We feel that we have here got a very long way from the time when the power of each god was supposed to be limited to the small space surrounding his sanctuary.

That this change had been brought about by the work of the Isiac priesthood, there can be little doubt. Between the foundation of the Alexandrian religion by Ptolemy and the date at which Apuleius wrote, a space of five centuries elapsed, and this must have seen many changes in the constitution of what may be called the Isiac Church. The Greeks always set their faces against anything like a priestly caste set apart from the rest of the community, and the priests of the Hellenic gods were for the most part elected, like modern mayors of towns, for a short term only, after which they fell back into the ranks of the laity with as little difficulty as do municipal officers at the present day. The Eleusinian Mysteries were indeed committed to certain families in whom their priesthood was hereditary; but no professional barriers existed between these families and the rest of the citizens; and we find Callias, the "torch-bearer" and one of the highest officials at the Mysteries, not only fighting in the ranks at Marathon, but distinguishing himself by his "cruelty and injustice" in retaining an unfair share of the plunder for himself<sup>1</sup>. The Eumolpidae and Lycomidae of Eleusis, also, were probably maintained not by any contribution from the state, but by the revenues of the temple lands and by the fee of a few obols levied from each initiate. But the Alexandrian Church in Egypt must from the first have been endowed and probably established as well. To judge from the analogous case of the dynastic cult or worship of the sovereign, which Ptolemy Soter set up, the "sublime religion" was in its native Egypt maintained by a tax on the revenues of those *wakf* or temple lands held in mortmain with which the native gods of Egypt were so richly provided from the earliest times. When the Alexandrian religion became a missionary faith and established itself in Athens and other parts of the Hellenic world, it no doubt depended in the

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Aristides*, c. v.



first instance on the voluntary contributions of the associations of Sarapiasts or Isiaci founded for its maintenance. But we may be sure that politic princes like the first three Ptolemies, who were besides the richest and most opulent of all the Successors of Alexander, did not let these outposts of their empire languish for lack of funds, and we may guess that the subscriptions of their members were supplemented in case of need by large donations from the King of Egypt or from those who wished to stand well with him. When the faith passed into Western Europe and into territories directly under Roman sway, it had already attained such fame that a large entrance-fee could be demanded from the initiates, and Apuleius tells us more than once that the amount of this was in every case fixed by a special revelation of the goddess, and was no doubt only limited by the length of the aspirant's purse and the strength of his vocation<sup>1</sup>. Like other Greek priests of the time, also, the ministers of the Alexandrian religion found a way of adding to their income by the practice of divination or foretelling the future, and the oracle of Serapis at Alexandria soon became as celebrated in the Hellenistic world as that of Delphi. There were probably more ways than one of consulting this; but the one which seems to have been specially its own, and which afterwards spread from Egypt into all the temples of the faith in other countries, was by the practice of *incubatio* which meant sleeping either personally or by deputy in the precinct of the god until the consultant had a dream in which the god's answer was declared. Such a practice seems to date from the dream sent to Ptolemy Soter at the foundation of the religion, and doubtless formed a great source of revenue to its priesthood<sup>2</sup>. The highest personages in the Roman Empire deigned to resort to it, and Vespasian was vouchsafed a divine vision in the temple of Serapis when he consulted the god about "the affairs

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Met.* cc. 21, 28, 30.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 48, *supra*. Oracles given in dreams were, however, an old institution in Egypt. See the dream of Thothmes IV concerning the Sphinx, Breasted, *History of Egypt*, p. 325, and *Ancient Records*, Chicago 1906, vol. II. No. 815.

of the Empire<sup>1</sup>." Not unconnected with this were the miraculous cures with which Serapis, originally perhaps by confusion with Asklepios the Greek god of healing<sup>2</sup>, was credited. The sick man was given a room in the temple precincts, where he doubtless lived the regular and orderly life of a modern hospital, and before long dreamed of a remedy for the malady on which his thoughts were concentrated. As the mind sometimes influences the body, and a belief in the healing power of the medicine is often of more importance than its nature, he very often recovered, and was no doubt expected to be generous in his offerings to the god who had intervened in his cure. Nor were worse means of raising money unknown to the Alexandrian priests, unless they have been greatly belied. They are said to have acted as panders and procurers for the rich, and it was the seduction of a noble Roman lady by a lover who assumed the garb of the god Anubis which led to their expulsion from the Pomoerium under Tiberius<sup>3</sup>. Astrology, too, which depended entirely on mathematical calculations and tables, was peculiarly an Alexandrian art, and the same Manetho who had been one of the persons consulted at the founding of the Alexandrian religion was said to have taught its principles to the Greeks. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that in Ovid's time the Alexandrian priests used to beg in the streets of Rome after the fashion of the Buddhist monks from whom they may have indirectly borrowed the practice, and that it was thought "unlucky" to reject their importunities<sup>4</sup>.

It is plain, however, that, by the time Apuleius wrote, the

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* Bk iv. cc. 81, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Asklepios or Esoulapius was one of the gods absorbed by Serapis. It is most probable that the great statue by Bryaxis in the Alexandrian Serapeum was originally an Asklepios. See Bouché-Leclercq, *Rev. de l'Hist. des Rel.* 1902, pp. 26, 27, 28. There seems also to have been a chapel to him in the Greek Serapeum at Memphis. See Brunet de Presle, "Le Sérapéum de Memphis," Paris, 1865, pp. 261-263. Cf. Forshall, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1839, p. 33, and note 1 p. 80, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, Bk xviii. cc. 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Lovatelli, *Il Culto d' Iside in Roma*, Roma, 1891, p. 174; Ovid, *Pontic. Epist.* Bk i. Ep. i.

necessity for any such shifts had passed away. The Alexandrian religion had then become a state religion, and was served by a fully organized and powerful priesthood. As there were not less than seven temples of Isis in Rome itself, the number of the Roman faithful must have been very considerable, and on their offerings and the gifts of the state, a large staff of priests was maintained. We hear not only of a high priest in each temple to whom all the lesser ministers of the cult were apparently subject<sup>1</sup>, but of hierophants, scribes, stolists or wardrobe-keepers, singing-men and singing-women, and a host of subordinate functionaries down to the *neocoros* or temple-sweeper and the *cliduchos* or guardian of the keys. Women as well as men were eligible for some of these offices, and the inscriptions tell us of a female *oneirocrites* or interpreter of dreams and of several *canephorae* or carriers of the sacred basket, besides many priestesses whose functions are not defined<sup>2</sup>. The high priest and the more important officers lived in the temple and probably devoted their whole time to its service<sup>3</sup>; but the lesser offices seem to have been capable of being held concurrently with lay occupations, like that of the churchwardens at the present day. But one and all were devoted to the faith and its propagation, and formed in the words of Apuleius "a sacred soldiery" for its extension and defence. It is probable that they were all drawn in the first instance from the ranks of the initiates only.

These were what may be called the secular clergy of the Alexandrian Church; but there was in addition a body of devotees attached to it whose mode of life singularly reminds us of that afterwards adopted by the Christian monks. A lucky chance has revealed to us some fragments of papyrus found on the site of the Serapeum at Memphis, which contain among other things the petitions of a Macedonian named Ptolemy the son of Glaucias to King Ptolemy VI Philometor

<sup>1</sup> As M. Lafaye (*Culte*, etc. p. 132) points out, the hierophant in Apuleius calls the other priests "his company," *suus numerus* (*Met.* c. 21).

<sup>2</sup> For all these, see Lafaye, *op. cit.* chap. vii: *Le Sacerdoce*.

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, *op. cit.* p. 150.

about the year 166 B.C.<sup>1</sup> From these it is evident that there were at that time a body of recluses lodged in the Serapeum who were vowed to a seclusion so complete that they might not stir forth from their cells under any pretence, and when the king visited Memphis he had to speak with his namesake and petitioner through the window of the latter's chamber. These recluses were in some way devoted to the service of the god, and their stay in the temple was to all appearance voluntary, although in Ptolemy's case, it had at the time he wrote lasted already fifteen years. He does not seem to have been driven to this by poverty, as he speaks of a considerable property left him by his father; and as the object of his petitions is to champion the rights of two priestesses of Serapis who had been wrongfully deprived of their dues of bread and oil by the officials of the temple, he seems to have been in some sort given to the performance of "good works." How he otherwise occupied his time, and whether his title or description of *κατοχος* implied any connection with the oracle of Serapis is still a disputed point. Yet the correspondence in which his name appears shows clearly the existence within the Serapeum of a large population of both men and women living at the expense of the temple revenues, some of whom took part in the ritual of the services there celebrated, while others were fixed by their own vows in the strictest seclusion. Whichever way the controversy alluded to above is decided, it seems plain that there is here a parallel between the practice of the Catholic Church with its division of the clergy into regular and secular and the Alexandrian

<sup>1</sup> These fragments are scattered among the different European museums. Some are in the Vatican Library and were published by Mgr. Angelo Mai in 1833 (Brunet de Presle, "*Les Papyri Grecs du Louvre*," *Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* XVIII. pt 2 (1865), p. 16), others in the Leyden Museum (Leemans, *Papyri Graeci*, I. pp. 6 *sqq.*), others in the Louvre (Brunet de Presle, *op. cit.* p. 22), and the largest number in the British Museum (Kenyon, *Greek Papyri*, p. 1). The whole story, so far as it has been ascertained, is told by Brunet de Presle, *op. cit.* pp. 261-263, and by Sir Frederic Kenyon, *op. cit.* pp. 1-5, and the questions arising out of it are admirably summed up by M. Bouché-Leclercq in his article, "*Les Reclus du Sérapéum de Memphis*" in *Mélanges Perrot*, Paris, 1903, p. 17.

religion, which until the discovery of the papyri some fifty years ago was entirely unsuspected.

It has been said above that the Alexandrian religion reached its apogee in the time of the Antonines. How it came to decline in power cannot be traced with great exactness, but it seems probable that it only lost its hold on the common people from the greater attractions presented by other religions competing with it for the popular favour. Other cults began to press in from the East, including the worship of Mithras, which in the time of Diocletian finally supplanted it in the favour of the state, and acquired perhaps a stronger hold on the army from reasons to be examined in detail when we come to deal with the Mithraic religion. But the rise of Christianity is in itself sufficient to account for its decline in popularity among the lower classes of the Empire. To them the Catholic Church, purged and strengthened by a sporadic and intermittent persecution, offered advantages that the Alexandrian religion could never give. In this last, the possession of wealth must always have assured its possessor a disproportionate rank in the religion, and without the expenditure of a large sum of money, it was impossible, as we have seen, to arrive at its most cherished secrets. Nor do we find in any of the few documents of the faith that have come down to us any parallel to that wide and all-embracing spirit of charity which in its early days made the Christian Church a kind of mutual benefit society for all who were willing to enter into her fold. To the poorest as to the wealthiest, the Catholic Church, too, always held out the promises of a faith to be understood by all and free from the mystery with which the cardinal doctrines of the Alexandrians were shrouded from all but the highest initiates. Its promises of happiness beyond the grave also were extended to even the most degraded, and the fulfilment of them was taught to be dependent on conduct within the reach of even the pauper or the repentant criminal rather than on the long, difficult and expensive course of instruction which its rival demanded. Nor were more material inducements neglected. The highest offices within the Church were open to the lowest of its members, and it was quite possible for a slave or a freedman to ascend the chair

of Peter, there to negotiate on equal terms with emperors and proconsuls. Unlike the religions of the ancient world which were first converted by Alexander's conquests from national into universal cults, the Christian religion was from its foundation organized on the democratic lines laid down in the text: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant<sup>1</sup>." Moreover, the predictions of the Christian missionaries as to the immediate coming of the Second Advent began to spread among the masses outside the Church, and found a soil ready to receive them in the minds of superstitious men trampled on by the rich, harried by the tax-gatherers, and torn this way and that by constant insurrections and civil wars stirred up, not by the Roman mob (kept quiet as it was with State doles) but by its too ambitious masters. Quite apart from the spiritual comfort that it brought to many, and from the greater unity and simplicity of its doctrines, we can hardly wonder that the proletariat everywhere turned eagerly to the new faith.

The effect of this upon the Alexandrian religion must have been fatal. Unfortunately the destruction of pagan literature has been so great that we know hardly anything about its decline from the mouths of its adherents<sup>2</sup>. What we are able to perceive is that the persons who adhered to the Alexandrian faith after the time of the Antonines generally practised many other religions as well. Alexander Severus had in his palace a *lararium* or private chapel in which, like most of the later Roman emperors, he placed statues of the gods whose worship he particularly affected. We find there Serapis and Isis, indeed, but surrounded with a great crowd of other divinities together with the images of philosophers like Socrates and Apollonius of Tyana, and—if the Augustan History is to be believed—that

<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxiii. 11. Cf. the Pope's title of "Servant of the Servants of God" (*Servus servorum Dei*).

<sup>2</sup> Julian in his letters (*Ep.* 52) speaks of Alexandria even in his time as being given up to the worship of Serapis. It is probable that in this, as in other matters, the philosophic Emperor believed what he wished to believe. Yet his contemporary, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist.* Bk. xxii. c. 16, § 20, speaks of the elements of the sacred rites being still preserved there in secret books, by which he seems to be referring to the worship of the Alexandrian divinities.

of the Founder of Christianity Himself<sup>1</sup>. So, too, the funeral inscription of Ulpius Egnatius Faventinus, an augur of high rank who flourished in the reign of Valens and Valentinian, records that the dead nobleman was a priest of Isis, but a hierophant of Hecate, a hieroceryx of Mithras, and a "chief Herdsman" of Bacchus as well. So, again, Fabia Aetonia Paullina, wife of Vettius Praetextatus, a Prefect and Consul Designate of about the same period, describes herself on her tombstone as consecrated at Eleusis to Dionysos, Demeter, and Persephone, and a hierophantis of Hecate, but merely a worshipper of Isis<sup>2</sup>. We see here a great change from the exclusive fervour of Apuleius' Lucius, who thinks it only just that Isis should require him to devote his whole life to her service.

But a violent end was soon to be put even to the public exercise of the Alexandrian religion. The conversion of Constantine had left it unharmed, and we find Julian writing to the Alexandrians during his brief reign as if the supremacy of their religion in Egypt's capital at any rate was assured<sup>3</sup>. But under Theodosius, an order was obtained from the Emperor for the demolition of the "heathen" temples at Alexandria, and Theophilus, "the perpetual enemy of peace and virtue<sup>4</sup>," who was bishop of the city at the time, was not the man to allow the decree to remain a dead letter. According to the ecclesiastical historians<sup>5</sup>, he began operations on the temple of Dionysos, which he converted into a Christian church. In the course of doing so, he professed to have discovered certain emblems of virility which seem to have been used in the Mysteries to illustrate the legend of the Diaspasm or tearing in pieces of the god, and these he had paraded through the city as evidence of what the heathens, according to him, worshipped in secret. The same emblems were also used in the worship of Isis, where

<sup>1</sup> See Renan, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1884, p. 197, for authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Orelli, *Inscript. Lat. select.* pp. 406-412. All these have now been transferred to the *Corp. Inscr. Lat.* q.v.

<sup>3</sup> See note 2 p. 82, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (Bury's edition), III. p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> Theodoret, *Hist. Ecc.* Bk v. c. 23; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk v. c. 16; Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk VII. c. 15.

they probably were shown to initiates as explaining the loss of the generative power by Osiris after his death and passion<sup>1</sup>. Hence their profanation was in the highest degree offensive to the last adherents of the Alexandrian religion, who, few in number but formidable from their position and influence, threw themselves into the world-famed Serapeum and determined to resist the decree by force of arms. The Christian mob of Alexandria, hounded on by the bishop and his monks, assaulted the temple which the philosopher Olympius and his followers had converted into a temporary fortress, and many attacks were repulsed with loss of life to the besiegers. At length, a truce having been negotiated until the Emperor could be communicated with, a fresh decree was obtained in which the defenders of the temple were promised a pardon for their share in the riot, if the Serapeum were quietly given up to the authorities. This offer was accepted, and Theophilus had the pleasure of seeing Bryaxis' colossal statue of Serapis demolished under his own eyes without the event being followed by the predicted earthquake and other catastrophes which we are told the Christians as well as the heathens confidently expected. The magnificent Serapeum with all its wealth of statues and works of art was destroyed, and a church dedicated to the Emperor Arcadius was afterwards erected on its site.

Thus in the year 391, the chief seat and place of origin of the Alexandrian religion was laid waste, and the religion itself perished after a successful reign of seven centuries. Ecclesiastical writers say that this was followed by the conversion of several of the "Hellenists" or adherents of the worship of Serapis and Isis to Christianity<sup>2</sup>, and there seems every likelihood that the story is founded on fact. Is this the reason why we find so many of the external usages of Isis-worship preserved in or revived by the Catholic Church? Macaulay, in speaking of the contest between Catholicism and Protestantism at the Reformation compares it to the fight between Hamlet and Laertes where the combatants change weapons. The comparative study of religions shows that the phenomenon is more widespread than he thought, and that when one religion finally

<sup>1</sup> See note 1 p. 73, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 17.



supplants another, it generally takes over from its predecessor such of its usages as seem harmless or praiseworthy. The traditional policy of the Catholic Church in this respect was declared by Saint Gregory the Great, when he told the apostle to the Saxon heathens that such of their religious and traditional observances as could by any means be harmonized with orthodox Christianity were not to be interfered with<sup>1</sup>, and this was probably the policy pursued with regard to the converts from the worship of Serapis. Gibbon<sup>2</sup> has painted for us in a celebrated passage the astonishment which "a Tertullian or a Lactantius" would have felt could he have been raised from the dead to witness the festival of some popular saint or martyr in a Christian church at the end of the fifth century. The incense, the flowers, the lights, and the adoration of the relics of the saint would all, we are told, have moved his indignation as the appanage of heathenism. Yet none of these things would have been found in a temple like that of Delphi, where probably no more than one worshipper or sacred embassy penetrated at a time, and where nothing like congregational worship was known. It was, however, the mode of worship to which the Hellenistic world had become daily accustomed during the seven centuries that the Alexandrian religion had endured, and it is not to be wondered at that the converts brought it with them into their new faith. The worship of the Virgin as the Theotokos or Mother of God which was introduced into the Catholic Church about the time of the destruction of the Serapeum, enabled the devotees of Isis to continue unchecked their worship of the mother goddess by merely changing the name of the object of their adoration, and Prof. Drexler gives a long list of the statues of Isis which thereafter were used, sometimes with unaltered attributes, as those of the Virgin Mary<sup>3</sup>. The general use of images, the suspension in the churches of *ex voto* representations of different parts of the human body in gratitude for miraculous

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, Paris, 1882, p. 630, for authority. Cf. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (Bury's edn.), iv. pp. 78, 79.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *op. cit.* III.

<sup>3</sup> Drexler in *Roscher's Lexikon*, s.v. Isis. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, t. II. p. 222.

cures of maladies<sup>1</sup>, and the ceremonial burning of candles, may also be traced to the same source; while the institution of monachism which had taken a great hold on Christian Egypt, is now generally attributed to St Pachomius, who had actually been in his youth a recluse of Serapis<sup>2</sup>. Prof. Bury, who thinks the action of the earlier faith upon the later in this respect undeniable, would also attribute the tonsure of the Catholic priesthood to a reminiscence of the shaven crowns of the initiates of Isis, to which we may perhaps add the covering of women's heads in churches<sup>3</sup>.

These instances are for the most part fairly well known, and some have been made use of in controversy between Protestants and Catholics; but it is probable that there were also many resemblances between the external usages of the two faiths which would, when they flourished side by side, strike even the superficial observer, but the traces of which are now well nigh lost<sup>4</sup>. "Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are vowed to Serapis," wrote the Emperor Hadrian<sup>5</sup> from Alexandria on his visit there in A.D. 124, and this would possibly explain the respectful and almost mournful tone in which, as Renan noted, the Christian Sibyl announces to Serapis and Isis the end of their reign<sup>6</sup>. It is not impossible that the resemblance which thus deceived the Emperor was connected with the celebration of

<sup>1</sup> Amm. Marcell. *op. cit.* Bk XXII. c. 13. According to Deubner, *De incubatione*, Leipzig, 1900, c. iv. Cyril of Alexandria had to establish the worship of two medical saints in the Egyptian hamlet of Menuthis near Canopus to induce the people to forget the miraculous cures formerly wrought there in the sanctuary of Isis.

<sup>2</sup> Bury in Gibbon, *op. cit.* vol. iv. Appendix 3, p. 527.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Apuleius' description of the veiling of the women's heads in the Isis procession, p. 72, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> A writer in Maspero's *Recueil de Travaux* for 1912, p. 75, mentions that the Isiac *sistrum* or rattle is still used by the Christians of Abyssinia.

<sup>5</sup> Vopiscus, *Saturninus* (*Hist. August. Scriptor.* vi. t. II. pp. 718-730). The authenticity of the letter has been defended by Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1891, I. p. 481. The date is fairly well fixed by the death of Antinous in 122 A.D., and Hadrian's visit to Syria a few years later. Ramsay (*Church in Roman Empire*, 1903, p. 336) makes it 134 A.D.

<sup>6</sup> Renan, *Marc Aur.* p. 433.

the Eucharist among certain sects of Christians<sup>1</sup>. The Adoration of the Sacred Water as the emblem of Osiris, which we have seen represented on the Herculaneum fresco, has many points in common with the exhibition of the Sacrament of the Mass to the people, and it is possible that the words of consecration were not altogether different in the two cases. "Thou art wine, yet thou art not wine, but the members of Osiris," says a magic papyrus in the British Museum in the midst of an address to "Asklepios of Memphis," the god Esculapius being one of the gods with whom Serapis in his day of power was most often confounded<sup>2</sup>. So, too, M. Revillout has published an *amatorium* or love-charm in which the magician says, "May this wine become the blood of Osiris<sup>3</sup>." It is true he sees in it a blasphemous adaptation of the Christian rite; but this is very unlikely. It has been shown elsewhere<sup>4</sup> that many—perhaps all—of the words used in the ceremonial magic of the period are taken from the rituals of religions dying or extinct, and the papyrus, which dates somewhere about the ivth century A.D., may possibly

<sup>1</sup> In the Catholic Church at this period the Eucharist was celebrated, if we may judge from the *First Apology* of Justin Martyr (c. LVI), in a very simple manner, but apparently in the presence of all the faithful. In that part of the Apostolical Constitutions (Bk VIII. c. 66), which is probably later in date than Justin, the catechumens, heterodox, and unbelievers are directed to be excluded before consecration (see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 301). It does not follow that the ceremonial was as simple with the Gnostics. Marcus is said by Irenaeus (Bk I. c. 6, pp. 116, 117, Harvey) to have made the mixture of wine and water in the cup to appear purple and to overflow into a larger vessel; while similar prodigies attend the celebration in the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Bruce Papyrus*, for which see Chap. X, *infra*. As such thaumaturgy was intended to astonish the on-lookers, it is probable that the elements were displayed before the whole congregation. That the later form of the ritual of the Christian sacraments was taken from the Gnostics, see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 295–305, and 307–309, and de Faye, *Introduction à l'Ét. du Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1903, pp. 106, 107.

<sup>2</sup> Kenyon, *Greek Papyri*, p. 105. Sir Frederick Kenyon questions the *theocrasia* of Serapis and Esculapius, but see Bouché-Leclercq, *Rev. Hist. Rel.* 1902, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Revillout, *Rev. Égyptol.* 1880, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> "The Names of Demons in the Magic Papyrus," *P.S.B.A.* 1901, pp. 41 *sqq.*

have here preserved for us a fragment of the ritual in use in the Alexandrian temples. "Give him, O Osiris, the cooling water" is the epitaph often written by the worshippers of Isis on the tombs of the dead<sup>1</sup>, and it may seem that we have here a hint of mystic communion with the deity brought about by the drinking of his emblem.

The resemblances between the Alexandrian and the Christian religion thus sketched, refer, however, merely to matters which are either external or superficial, or which, like the worship of the Virgin, the use of images and relics, and the institution of monachism, could be abandoned, as was the case at the German Reformation, without necessarily drawing with them the repudiation of the cardinal tenets of Christianity. That the Christian Church owed at her inception any of her more fundamental doctrines to the Alexandrian religion is not only without proof, but is in the highest degree unlikely. The Apostles and missionaries of the Apostolic Age, living as they did in daily expectation of the return of their Risen Lord, had no need to go to an alien faith for the assertion of His divinity, of the truth of His resurrection, or of His power of salvation; nor do the Fathers of the Ante-Nicene Church speak of Serapis and Isis as entitled to any peculiar reverence or as differing in any respect from the other gods of the heathen. Whether the tenets of the Alexandrian religion may not have had some influence on the discussions which raged round the definition of the Divine nature and attributes at the earlier Ecumenical and other Councils of the Church is another matter. The conception of the Supreme Being as a triune god was a very old one in Egypt, and reappeared, as we have seen, unchanged in the worship of Serapis, Isis, and Horus. "Thus from one god I became three gods," says Osiris in his description of his self-creation in a papyrus dated twelve years after the death of Alexander<sup>2</sup>; and the dividing-line between the three persons of the Alexandrian triad is so often overstepped that it is plain that their more cultured worshippers at one time considered

<sup>1</sup> Lafaye, *Culte*, etc. p. 96, and inscriptions there quoted.

<sup>2</sup> Budge, "Papyrus of Nesi-Amsu," p. 442.

them as but varying forms of one godhead<sup>1</sup>. Hence, the Trinitarian formulas set out in the Creeds of Nicaea and of St Athanasius would be less of a novelty to those familiar with the Alexandrian religion than to those brought up in the uncompromising monotheism of the Jews. Too little is known of the steps by which the full assertion of the doctrine of the Trinity was reached for any discussion of the matter to be here profitable<sup>2</sup>. The deepest influence that the Alexandrian religion exercised upon the Church was probably not direct, but through those scattered and heretical sects which, although finally condemned and anathematized by her, yet ever acted as feeders by whom she obtained converts from among the heathen. To these we may now turn our attention.

<sup>1</sup> See "The Greek Worship of Serapis and Isis," *P.S.B.A.* 1914, pp. 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup> That the Trinitarian doctrine of the Creed of Nicaea evolved gradually will now, I suppose, be admitted by all. Mr Conybeare, *Apology of Apollonius*, 1894, p. 14, probably goes too far when he says that "the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity" is not met with till the end of the third century. So Guignebert, *L'Évolution des Dogmes*, Paris, 1910, pp. 293, 294, tells us how in his opinion the dogma followed "at some distance" the assertion of the Divinity of Christ. Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Eng. ed. 1904, II. pp. 257, 258, seems to attribute the first formulation of the dogma to Tertullian who, according to him, owed something to the Gnostics. It is at any rate plain that neither Hermas, nor the Apologists, nor Irenaeus, nor Clement of Alexandria, nor Origen were in accord with later orthodoxy on the point. Monsignor Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, Eng. ed. 1909, p. 20, puts the matter very frankly when he suggests that the average Christian troubled himself very little about it. "This is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity," he says after defining it, "not certainly as it was formulated later in opposition to transient heresies, but as it appeared to the general conscience of the early Christians. . . . The generality of Christians in the first century even in apostolic days stood here almost exactly at the same point as present-day Christians. Theologians knew, or at any rate said, far more about it."

## CHAPTER III

### THE ORIGIN OF GNOSTICISM

THE worship of the Alexandrian gods was in every sense a religion. Not only did it form a common bond between men and women of different rank and origin, but it had its roots in the idea of propitiating the spiritual world. In the belief of its votaries, the blessings of health, of riches, of long life, and of happiness in this world and the next, were the gifts of Serapis and Isis, which they might extend to or withhold from mortals as seemed to them good<sup>1</sup>. But now we approach beliefs and practices, for the most part formed into organized cults, which were founded on the opposite idea. Those treated of in this and the seven succeeding chapters all have as their common root the notion that it is possible instead of propitiating to compel the spiritual powers. If these beings, greater and stronger than man as they were thought to be, were once invoked by their real names and with the proper ceremonies, it was said that the benefits demanded of them would follow as a matter of course without regard to the state of mind of the applicant and without the volition of the invisible ones themselves entering into play. This idea appears so early in the history of religions that it is thought by some to be the very source and origin of them all. A number of able writers, of

<sup>1</sup> Thus an Orphic verse, preserved by a commentator on Plato, says that Dionysos "releases whom he wills from travail and suffering." See Abel's *Orphica*, Fr. 208, p. 237. Servius in his commentary on Virgil's First Georgic, after declaring that Dionysos or "Liber Pater" is identical with the Osiris torn in pieces by Typhon, says that he is called Liber because he liberates. Cf. fragment and page quoted.

whom Lord Avebury<sup>1</sup> was one of the earliest, and Dr Frazer<sup>2</sup> is one of the latest examples, contend that there was a time in the history of mankind when man trusted entirely to his supposed powers of compulsion in his dealings with the invisible world, and that the attempt to propitiate it only developed out of this at a later period. It may be so, and the supporters of this theory are certainly not wrong when they go on to say that the same idea probably inspired those earliest attempts at the conquest of Nature which formed the first gropings of man towards natural science<sup>3</sup>. Up till now, however, they have failed to produce any instance of a people in a low state of culture who practise magic—as this attempted compulsion of the spiritual world is generally called—to the exclusion of every form of religion; and until they do so, their thesis cannot be considered as established. On the contrary, all researches into the matter lead to the conclusion that magic generally begins to show itself some time after the religious beliefs of a people have taken an organized shape, and most prominently when they have passed their period of greatest activity<sup>4</sup>. This is particularly noticeable in the case of Ancient Egypt, which affords, as M. George Foucart has lately shown with much skill<sup>5</sup>, a far more lively and complete picture of the evolution of religious ideas than can be found in the beliefs of savages. Here

<sup>1</sup> Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, 5th ed., pp. 332, 333, and 349.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed. pt. I. vol. I. p. 226, n. 2. Cf. Hubert and Mauss, *Esquisse d'une Théorie générale de la Magie*, Paris, 1904, p. 8. Goblet d'Alviella, reviewing Dr Frazer's 2nd edition, *Rev. Hist. Rel.* t. XLVIII. (July-Aug. 1903), pp. 70, 79 rebuts his theory. Mr E. S. Hartland, at the British Association's Meeting in 1906, propounded the view that both magic and religion were based on the conception of a transmissible personality or *mana*. Cf. *id.* *Ritual and Belief*, 1914, pp. 49 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Hubert and Mauss, *op. cit.* p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Thus the German Reformation, which (whatever be its merits) was certainly accompanied by a general questioning of ideas till then considered the very basis of all religion, was followed by the terrible outbreak known as the Witch Mania of the xvith century. See Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, 1869, pp. 101-191. Other authorities are quoted in "Witchcraft in Scotland," *Scottish Review*, 1891, pp. 257-288.

<sup>5</sup> *Histoire des Religions et Méthode Comparative*, Paris, 1912, pp. 21-61.

we see beliefs and practices, once religious in every sense of the term, gradually becoming stereotyped and petrified until all memory of their origin and reason is lost, and the religion itself lapses into the systematized sorcery before referred to.

This phenomenon appears with great regularity in history; and it is an observation very easily verified that the practice of magic generally spreads in places and times where the popular religion has become outworn<sup>1</sup>. As, moreover, enquiry shows us that words taken from the rituals of dead faiths play the chief part in all ceremonial magic<sup>2</sup>, we might be led to conclude that magic was but an unhealthy growth from, or the actual corruption of, religion. But if this were the case, we should find magicians despoiling for their charms and spells the rituals of cults formerly practised in their own countries only; whereas it is more often from foreign faiths and languages that they borrow. The tendency of all peoples to look upon earlier and more primitive races than themselves as the depositaries of magical secrets is one of the best known phenomena<sup>3</sup>. Thus, in modern India, it is the aboriginal Bhils and Gonds who are resorted to as sorcerers by the Aryans who have supplanted them<sup>4</sup>, while the Malays seem to draw their magic almost

<sup>1</sup> See note 4 on p. 91, *supra*. Cf. also the great increase of magical practices which followed the attempted overthrow of religion by the philosophers after Alexander.

<sup>2</sup> Some instances, such as "hocus-pocus" (*hoc est corpus meum*), are given in *P.S.B.A.* xx. (1898), p. 149. An excellent example is found in a spell to cause invisibility in a magic papyrus at Berlin where the magician is directed to say among other words *anok peusire penta set tako* "I am that Osiris whom Set murdered"—evidently a phrase from some Egyptian ritual extinct centuries before the papyrus was written. See Parthey, *Zwei griechische Zauberpapyri*, 1866, p. 127, l. 252. Cf. Erman, "Die Ägyptische Beschwörungen" in *Ägyptische Zeitschrift*, 1883, p. 109, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871, i. pp. 102-104. Cf. Crookes, *Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, 1896, ii. p. 283; Hubert and Mauss, *op. cit.* pp. 26, 27; A. Réville, *Religion des Peuples non-civilisés*, 1883, ii. p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Crookes, *op. cit.* ii. p. 261, says that witchcraft in Northern India is at present almost specialized among the Dravidian, or aboriginal people—of which fact Mr Rudyard Kipling makes great use in his charming story "Letting in the Jungle."



entirely from the beliefs of their Arab conquerors<sup>1</sup>. So, too, in Egypt we find that the magicians of the xixth Dynasty made use in their spells of foreign words which seem to be taken from Central African languages<sup>2</sup>, and those of early Christian times use Hebrew phrases with which they must for the first time have become acquainted not very long before<sup>3</sup>.

At the same time there are many proofs that magic is something more than a by-product of religion. No people, however backward, who do not practise magic in some or other of its forms, have yet been discovered; while at the same time it has always persisted among those nations who consider themselves the most highly civilized. Thus, we find the Mincopies who inhabit the Andaman Islands and are thought by some to be the lowest of mankind, threatening with their arrows the spirit that is supposed to cause tempests, and lighting fires on the graves of their dead chiefs to drive him away<sup>4</sup>. At the other end of the scale we have the story of the Scottish Covenanter,

“John Scrimgeour, minister of Kinghorn, who, having a beloved child sick to death of the crewels, was free to expostulate with his Maker with such impatience of displeasure, and complaining so bitterly, that at length it was said unto him, that he was heard for that time, but that he was requested to use no such boldness in time coming”:

and a similar story is told of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 1900, pp. 533 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Chabas, *Le Papyrus Magique Harris*, 1860, pp. 151, 162 *sq.* Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. ed. p. 355, while admitting that the Egyptians thought the words in question belonged to a foreign tongue, says that they were “pure inventions.” He is certainly wrong, for some of them can be identified.

<sup>3</sup> Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Mus. Antiq. Lugduni-Batavi*; Wessely, *Griechische Zauberpapyrus von Paris und London*, and *Neue Griechische Zauberpapyri*, Wien, 1893, *passim*. Cf. Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, p. 62. So in mediaeval magic, the words in the spells unintelligible to the magician are generally Greek. See Reginald Scot, *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1651), p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> Réville, *Rel. des Peuples non-civilisés*, II. p. 164.

Jesuits<sup>1</sup>. It seems then that magic is so inextricably intertwined with religion that the history of one of them cannot be effectually separated from that of the other, and neither of them can be assigned any priority in time. This does not mean, however, that they are connected in origin, and it is probable that the late Sir Alfred Lyall was right when he said that magic and religion are in their essence antagonistic and correspond to two opposing tendencies of the human mind<sup>2</sup>. The same tendencies lead one man to ask for what he wants while another will prefer to take it by force, and it is even possible that the same alternative of choice is sometimes manifested in the lower animals<sup>3</sup>.

Now it is evident that in the practice of cults where the idea of the compulsion of the invisible powers is prominent, the essential factor will be the *knowledge* of the proper means to be adopted to attain the end sought. But this does not at once strike the observer, because at first sight these appear to be the same as those used in the cults which rest on the idea of propitiation. Prayers and sacrifices indeed appear in magical quite as often as in the case of propitiatory rites, but the reason of them is entirely different. Prayer in a religion—could any such be found—entirely free from all admixture of magic or compulsion, would be based on the attempt to move the pity of the divinity invoked for the miserable and abased state of the suppliant, or by some other means. A striking example of this can be found in the Assyrian prayers from the palace of Assur-bani-pal, which might be, as the rubric informs us, made to any god<sup>4</sup>. Says the suppliant :

<sup>1</sup> Scott in the *Heart of Midlothian* quotes the first story, I think, from Peter Walker, but I have not been able to find the passage. For Ignatius Loyola, see Böhmer, *Les Jésuites*, French ed. 1910, p. 10. Cf. Alphandéry, *R.H.R.* 1911, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Asiatic Studies*, 1882, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* well-fed dogs who worry sheep, and cats who steal fish and other delicacies rather than have them given to them. The actions of the animals show in both cases that they know that what they are doing is displeasing to their owners.

<sup>4</sup> Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, pp. 420 *sqq.* For these penitential psalms generally, see Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, Boston, 1898, chap. xviii.

“O my god my sins are many, my transgressions are great.  
 I sought for help, and none took my hand.  
 I wept, and none stood by my side;  
 I cried aloud, and there was none that heard me.  
 I am in trouble and hiding, and dare not look up.  
 To my god, the merciful one, I turn myself, I utter my prayer.  
 The feet of my goddess I kiss and water with tears....  
 O Lord, cast not away thy servant....”

The same spirit may be noticed in the early religions of the Greeks, although here the worshipper uses, as his means of propitiation, flattery rather than entreaty, as when the Achilles of the *Iliad* tries to move Zeus by an enumeration of his different titles, addressing him as “Father Zeus, that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great<sup>1</sup>,” and Athena is appealed to by Nestor in the *Odyssey* as “Daughter of Zeus, driver of the spoil, the maiden of Triton<sup>2</sup>” and so on. As, however, magical ideas come to the front, we find these prayers giving way to others containing neither appeals for mercy nor flattery, but merely long strings of names and attributes, all designed to show an acquaintance with the antecedents and supposed natural disposition of the divinity addressed, and inspired by the fear that the one name which might exert a compelling effect upon his answer might accidentally have been omitted<sup>3</sup>. So, too, the sacrifices, which in early times were chosen on the sole principle of giving to the god what was best and costliest, came later to be regulated by the supposed knowledge of what was especially appropriate to him for reasons based on sympathetic magic or the association of ideas. Thus, swine were sacrificed to Demeter, he-goats to Dionysos, cattle and horses to Poseidon, and rams to Heracles<sup>4</sup>, instead of the animals, chosen only for their youth and beauty and with or without gilded horns, that

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* III. II. 280 *sqq.* (Lang, Leaf, and Myers trans. p. 57).

<sup>2</sup> *Odyss.* III. II. 373 *sqq.* (Butcher and Lang trans. p. 43).

<sup>3</sup> According to Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* I. p. 163, this was always the case in Egypt, at least in historic times. “Prayer,” he says, “was a formula of which the terms had an imperative value, and the exact enunciation of which obliged the god to concede what was asked of him.”

<sup>4</sup> Maury, *Religions de la Grèce Antique*, II. pp. 97 *sqq.*

we read about in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*<sup>1</sup>. Clearly such distinctions necessitate a much closer knowledge of the divine nature than where the answer to prayer or sacrifice depends merely on the benevolence of the deity.

It is also evident that such ideas will give rise to curiosity with regard to the nature and history of the gods, to their relations with one another, and to the extent and division of their rule over Nature, which would hardly affect those who think that all events depend simply upon the nod of the super-human powers<sup>2</sup>. Hence it is evident that one of the first consequences of a large admixture of magic in a religion will be a great increase of myths and legends in which the actions of the gods will be recounted with more or less authority, and some observed natural phenomenon will be pointed to as evidence of the truth of the stories narrated<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the means by which the consequence of any voluntary or involuntary transgression of the supposed commands of the gods can be averted will be eagerly sought after, and these, whether they take the form of purifications, lustrations, or other expiatory rites, will all be strictly magical in character, and will generally consist in the more or less detailed representation of some episode in their history, on the well-known principle of magic that any desired effect can be produced by imitating it<sup>4</sup>. In all these cases it is knowledge and not conduct which is required, and thus it is that *gnosticism* or a belief in the importance of acquaintance with the divine world, its motives, and the influences to which it is subject, enters into religion. Then it comes about that man begins to trouble himself about the origin of the universe and its end, the cause of his own appearance upon the earth, and the position that he occupies in the scale of being. Hence theogonies or tales relating how the gods came into existence, and

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* x. l. 292; *Odys.* xi. l. 30, and where before quoted.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is to this last view that we should attribute the well-known indifference of the Semitic peoples to mythology and science.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* the Rainbow in Genesis ix. 12-16. Erman, in his *History of Egyptian Religion*, p. 31, points out that Egyptian mythology is found only in magical books.

<sup>4</sup> Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed. pt I. vol. I. p. 52.

their kinship to one another, cosmogonies or accounts of the creation of the world, and apocalypses or stories professing to reveal the lot of man after death and the fate to which our universe is destined, take shape to an extent unknown to religions which remain merely or chiefly propitiatory.

There is, however, another and a less sublime kind of knowledge which is everywhere associated with the appearance of gnosticism. This is the knowledge of ceremonies and formulas, of acts to be done and of words to be said, which are thought to exercise a compelling effect on the supra-sensible world, and which we may class together under the generic name of ceremonial magic. Our acquaintance with these at the period under discussion has lately been much enlarged by the decipherment and publication of the so-called Magic Papyri found for the most part in Egypt and now scattered throughout the principal museums of Europe<sup>1</sup>. These turn out on investigation to be the manuals or handbooks of professional sorcerers or magicians, and to range in date from the IIIrd century before to the IVth or Vth after Christ. They contain, for the most part without any order or coherence, details of the different ceremonies used for the personal aggrandizement of the user, for gaining the love of women and (conversely) for putting hate between a man and his wife; for healing disease and casting out devils; for causing dreams, discovering thieves, and gaining knowledge of the thoughts of men and of things past and to come; and for obtaining, by other than direct means, success in athletic competitions. In others, we find directions for evoking gods or spirits who may thus be bound to the service of the magician, for raising the dead for necromantic purposes, and for the destruction of enemies, mingled with technical recipes for making ink and for the compounding of drugs. A feature common to nearly all these charms is their illustration by certain roughly-drawn pictures and formulas which seem at first to be mere strings of letters without sense.

A few specimens of these charms may help to make this

<sup>1</sup> The principal collections of these are indicated in note 3 on p. 93, *supra*. Cf. "The Names of Demons in the Magic Papyri," *P.S.B.A.* 1901.

description clearer. In a papyrus now in the British Museum which is said from the writing to date from the ivth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>, we find the following charms for obtaining an oracular response in a dream:

“Take of the inner leaves of the laurel and of virgin earth and wormwood seeds flour and of the herb cynocephalum (and I have heard from a certain man of Heracleopolis [now Ahnas el-Medineh] that he takes of the leaves of an olive-tree newly sprouted)... It is carried by a virgin boy ground up with the materials afore-said and the white of an ibis’ egg is mixed with the whole compound. There must also be an image of Hermes clad in the chlamys, and the moon must be rising in the sign of Aries or Leo or Sagittarius. Now let Hermes hold the herald’s wand, and do thou write the spell on hieratic paper. And take a goose’s windpipe, as I also learned from the Heracleopolite, and insert it into the figure so as to be able to blow into it. When you wish for an oracular answer, write the spell and the matter in hand, and having cut a hair from your head, wrap it up in the paper and tie it with a Phoenician knot, and put it at the feet of the caduceus, or, as some say, place it upon it. Let the figure be in a shrine of limewood, and when you wish for an oracular answer place the shrine with the god at your head, and make invocation, offering frankincense on an altar and some earth from a place where there is growing corn, and one lump of sal ammoniac. Let this be placed at your head and lie down to sleep after first saying this, but giving no answer to anyone who may address you:

“Hermes, lord of the world, inner circle of the moon  
 Round and square, originator of the words of the tongue  
 Persuading to justice, wearer of the chlamys, with winged sandals  
 Rolling an ethereal course under the lower parts of the earth  
 Guide of spirits, greatest eye of the sun  
 Author of all manner of speech, rejoicing with lights  
 Those mortals whose life being finished are under the lower parts  
 of the earth.

<sup>1</sup> Kenyon, *Gk. Pap. in Brit. Mus.* p. 77. This is the date of the MS. The spells themselves are probably much older.

Thou art called the foreknower of destinies, and the divine vision  
Sending oracles both by day and by night.

Thou dost heal all the ills of mortals with thy medicines.

Come hither, blessed one, greatest son of perfect memory

Appear propitious in thy own shape, and send a propitious form

That by the excellence of thy divining art I, a hallowed man, may  
receive what I need.

O Lord grant my prayer, appear and grant me a true oracle !

“ Make the adjuration at the risings of the sun and moon.

“(The inscription to be written on the paper wrappings of the figure.)

“ *Huesemigadôn, Orthô Baubô, nôê odêre soire soire*

*Kanthara, Ereschchigal, sankistê, dodekakistê*” etc.

In this charm we have nearly all the typical elements of the magic of the period. The windpipe of a goose or other long-necked animal was, we learn from Hippolytus, inserted into the hollow head of the metal statue of the god, in order that the priest might use it as a speaking tube, and thus cause the statue to give forth oracular responses in a hollow voice<sup>1</sup>. Hence its use would be thought particularly appropriate when an oracle was sought, although in circumstances where it would be ineffective for purposes of deceit. The fragment of a hymn in hexameter verse to a god whom it addresses as Hermes is doubtless of great antiquity and taken from the ritual of some half-Greek, half-Oriental worship such as we may imagine to have been paid to the Cabiri, in which a god identified by the Greeks with their own Hermes was particularly honoured. The words of the spell to be written on the paper are by no means the mere gibberish they seem, although they have been so corrupted that it is almost impossible to recognise even the language in which they are written. The word *Huesemigadôn* is, however, an epithet or name of Pluto the ruler of Hades,

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophumena*, Bk iv. c. 28. Hippolytus is probably wrong in thinking this a conscious imposture. The magician, like his clients, does not connect cause and effect in such cases. Sir Alfred Lyall told Lord Avebury that he had often seen Indian sorcerers openly mixing croton oil with the ink in which their charms were written so as to produce a purgative effect when the ink was washed off and swallowed. See Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, p. 24.

and occurs in that connection, as has been shown elsewhere, in many of these magic spells<sup>1</sup>. The *Orthô Baubô* which follows it is generally found in the same context and seems to cover the name of that Baubo who plays a prominent part in the Mysteries of Eleusis and appears to have been confused in later times with Persephone, the spouse of Pluto<sup>2</sup>. *Ereshchigal* [Eres-ki-gal], again, is a word borrowed from the first or Sumerian inhabitants of Babylonia, and means in Sumerian "the Lady of the great (*i.e.* the nether) world," being a title frequently used for Allat the goddess of hell, who appears in the very old story of the Descent of Ishtar and is the Babylonian counterpart of Persephone<sup>3</sup>. Why she should have been called *dodekakistê* or the 12th cannot now be said; but it is possible that we have here a relic of the curious Babylonian habit of giving numbers as well as names to the gods, or rather of identifying certain numbers with certain divinities<sup>4</sup>. On the whole, therefore, it may be judged that the words of the spell once formed part of the ritual of a Sumerian worship long since forgotten and that they travelled across Western Asia and were translated as far as might be into Greek, when that language became the common tongue of the civilized world after Alexander's conquests.

This may be taken for a spell having its origin in, or at any rate depending for its efficacy upon, the relics of some Western

<sup>1</sup> *P.S.B.A.* xxii. (1900), pp. 121 *sqq.* An explanation of the name is attempted by Giraud, *Ophitæ*, Paris, 1884, p. 91, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Antiq. s.v.* Baubo. The name *Ortho* perhaps suggests that of the very ancient goddess later called *Artemis Orthia*, whose original name seems to have been *Orthia* only. Cf. M. S. Thompson's paper "The Asiatic or Winged *Artemis*" in *J.H.S.* vol. xxix. (1909), pp. 286 *sqq.*, esp. p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> *P.S.B.A.* xxii. (1900), p. 121, and see Griffith and Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden*, p. 61 and note.

<sup>4</sup> Probably, however, it refers to the number of letters in the name in some more or less fantastic spelling or cryptogram. When Hippolytus speaks of the Demiurge Ialdabaoth as "a fiery God, a fourth number" (*Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 7, p. 153, Cruice), there can be little doubt that he is referring to the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name of Jehovah. Cf. the "hundred-lettered" name of Typhon, p. 104, *infra*.



Asiatic faith. The following taken from another papyrus now in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris shows acquaintance with the Egyptian religion—probably through the Alexandrian or Isiacist form of it described in Chapter II—and is perhaps a more salient example of the compulsive element common to all magic, but particularly associated with the Egyptian magicians. It is given in the shape of a letter purporting to be addressed by a certain Nephtotes to the Pharaoh Psamtik whom the Greeks called Psammetichos, and who managed, as has been said above, to drive out the Ethiopians and to rule Egypt by the help of Greek mercenaries. There is no reason to suppose that this attribution is anything more than a charlatanic attempt to assign to it a respectable origin; but it is probable from certain indications that it was really taken from an earlier hieratic or demotic MS. of pre-Christian times. It has been published by Dr Karl Wessely of Vienna<sup>1</sup> and is written in Greek characters of apparently the IIIrd century A.D.

“Nephtotes to Psammetichos king of Egypt, the ever living, greeting. Since the great god [Serapis?] has restored to thee an eternal kingdom, and Nature has made thee an excellent adept, and I am also willing to show forth to thee the love of art which is mine—I have sent to thee this ceremony, a holy rite made perfect with all ease of working, which having tested, you will be amazed at the unexpected nature of this arrangement. You will see with your own eyes in the bowl in what day or night you will and in what place you will. You will see the god in the water, receiving the word from the god in what verses you will. [It will reach also?] the world-ruler and if you ask a question of him he will speak even of all the other things you seek. [A description of the ointment to be used doubtless once followed, but has been omitted in the Paris MS.<sup>2</sup>]

<sup>1</sup> *Griechische Zauberpapyri von Paris und London*, pp. 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> The use of ointment for magical purposes is well known, and it was the incautious use of an ointment of this kind which changed Lucius, the hero of Apuleius' romance, into an ass. The use of ointments which had the property of translating the user to the Witches' Sabbath frequently occurs in the witch-trials of the Renaissance, and it has been suggested that drugs producing hallucinations were thus applied. The word *κοινή* often found in these spells seems to point to some ointment or preparation used in all the magic ceremonies described.

Having thus anointed yourself and having put together before the rising of the sun in this form (?) what things you will, when the third day of the moon has come, go with the mystagogue upon the roof of the house, and spread upon the earth a clean linen cloth, and having crowned yourself with black ivy at the 5th hour after noon, lie down naked on the linen cloth, and order him [the mystagogue] to bind your eyes with a bandage of black linen; and having laid yourself down like a corpse [or, on your back?], close your eyes, making the sign of consecration towards the sun with these words:—

“O mighty Typhon of the sceptre on high, sceptred ruler, God of Gods. King *Aberamenthōu*<sup>1</sup>, hill shaker, bringer of thunder, hurricane, who lightens by night, hot-natured one, rock shaker, destroyer of wells, dasher of waves, who disturbs the deep with movement. *Io erbēt autauimēni*. I am he who with thee has uprooted the whole inhabited world and seeks out the great Osiris who brought thee chains. I am he who with thee fights on the side of the gods (some say against the gods). I am he who has shut up the twin sides of heaven, and has lulled to sleep the invisible dragon. and who has established the sea [and?] the red springs of rivers. Until thou shall no longer be lord of this dominion, I am thy soldier, I was conquered [and hurled] headlong by the gods. I was thrown down by [their] wrath in vain [or, because of the void]. Awake! I come as a suppliant, I come as thy friend, and thou wilt not cast me out, O earth-caster. King of the gods. *aemonaebarôtherreethôrabeanēmea*<sup>2</sup>. Be strong, I entreat! Grant me this grace that, when I shall command one of the gods themselves to come to my incantations, I may see them coming quickly! *Nāine basanaptatou eaptou mēnô phaesmē paptoumēnôph aesimē trauapti peuchrê, trauara ptoumēph, mouraianchouchaphapta moursaaramēi. Iaô aththaravi mēnoker boroptoumēth attavi mēni charchara ptoumai lalapsa trauēi*

<sup>1</sup> *Aber-amenti*: “Lord (lit. Bull) or Conqueror of Amenti,” the Egyptian Hades. The name is of frequent occurrence in all these spells. Jesus, in one of the later documents of the *Pistis Sophia*, is called *Aberamenthō*, in circumstances that would make the title peculiarly appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> A palindrome containing the same word or sentence written both forwards and backwards. The phrase here given (*aemonaebarôth*) is probably Hebrew, which the scribe may have known was written the reverse way to most European languages. It is noteworthy that a mistake in transcription is made when the phrase is written backwards.

*trauei mamôphortoula*<sup>1</sup> *aeêio iou oêôa eai aeêiôî iaô aêi ai iaô*<sup>2</sup>. On your repeating this three times, there will be this sign of the alliance<sup>3</sup>. But you having the soul of a magician will be prepared. Do not alarm yourself, for a sea-hawk hovering downwards will strike with his wings upon your body<sup>4</sup>. And do thou having stood upon thy feet clothe thyself in white garments, and in an earthen censer scatter drops of frankincense speaking thus: 'I exist in thy sacred form. I am strong in thy sacred name. I have lighted upon the flowing-forth of thy good things, O Lord, God of Gods, king demon. *Atthouin thouthoui tauanti laôaptatô*.' Having done this, you may descend like a god, and will command the [order ?]<sup>5</sup> of Nature through this complete arrangement of autoptic [*i.e.* clairvoyant] lecanomancy. It is also a way of compelling the dead to become visible. For when you wish to enquire concerning [any] events, you must take a brazen jar or dish or pan, whichever you will, and fill it with water, which if you are invoking the celestial gods must be living [Qy. running or sparkling ?]; but, if the terrestrial divinities, from the sea; and if Osiris or Sarapis, from the river [Nile ?]; and, if the dead, from a well. Take the vessel upon your knees, pour upon it oil made from unripe olives, then bending over the vessel repeat the following invocation and invoke what god you will and an answer will be given to you and he will speak to you concerning all things. But if and when he shall have spoken, dismiss

<sup>1</sup> This sentence was probably once Egyptian from the frequent recurrence of *p* and *t* as the initial letters of words. They are the masculine and feminine forms of the definite article in Coptic.

<sup>2</sup> These "boneless strings of vowels," as C. W. King calls them in his *Gnostics and their Remains*, 1887, p. 320, are thought by him to cover the name of Jehovah. Another theory is that they are a musical notation giving the tone in which the spell is to be pronounced.

<sup>3</sup> *Σύστασις*. The text gives the most usual meaning of the word: but it may here mean something like the "materialization" spoken of by spiritualists.

<sup>4</sup> The word used (*πλάσμα*) properly means image. But no image or idol has been mentioned. It is curious that in the Mithraic mysteries, we hear of the initiates, apparently during the reception of a candidate, "striking [him ?] with birds' wings." Cf. the text attributed (doubtfully) to St Augustine in Cumont, *Textes et Monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, Bruxelles, 1896, t. II. p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Some word like *οικονομία* seems to have been omitted by the scribe.

him with the dismissal which you will wonder at, using the same speech.

"Speech to be said over the vessel. *Amoun auantau laimoutau riptou mantau imantau lantou laptoumi anchômach araptoumi*. Hither, such and such a god! Be visible to me this very day and do not appal my eyes. Hither to me such and such a god! giving ear to my race [?]. For this is what *anchôr anchôr achachach ptoumi chancho charachôch chaptoumê chôraharchôch aptoumi mêchôchaptou charach ptou chanchô charachô ptenachôcheu*, a name written in a hundred letters, wishes and commands. And do not thou, most mighty king, forget the magicians among us; because this is the earliest name of Typhon, at which tremble the earth, the abyss, Hades, heaven, the sun, the moon, the place of the stars and the whole phenomenal universe. When this name is spoken, it carries along with its force gods and demons. It is the hundred-lettered name, the same name as last written. And when thou hast uttered it, the god or the dead person who hears it will appear to thee and will answer concerning the things you ask. And when you have learned all things, dismiss the god only with the strong name, the one of the hundred letters, saying 'Begone, Lord, for thus wills and commands the great god!' Say the name and he will depart. Let this treatise, O mighty king, be kept to thyself alone, being guarded from being heard by any other. And this is the phylactery which you should wear. It should be arranged on a silver plate. Write the same name with a brazen pen and wear it attached with a strip of ass's skin<sup>1</sup>."

The purpose of the charm just given is, as will be seen, to produce apparitions in a bowl containing liquid after the fashion still common in the near East<sup>2</sup>. It amply bears out the remark of Iamblichus that the Egyptian magicians, differing therein from the Chaldaean, were accustomed in their spells to threaten the gods<sup>3</sup>, and many other instances of this can

<sup>1</sup> Because the ass was considered a Typhonic animal.

<sup>2</sup> The form of hypnotism known as crystal-gazing. A full description is given in Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, 1896, pp. 276 *sqq.* Cf. "Divination in the xviii Century," *National Review*, 1899, pp. 93-104, for its practice in England.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter of Porphyry to Anebo quoting Chaeremon. That this practice was peculiar to the Egyptian magicians is stated by Iamblichus,

be found in other passages of the magic papyri. But it should be noticed that in this case the magician is dealing with a power thought to be hostile alike to man and to the beneficent gods. Typhon, who is, as Plutarch tells us, the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian Set, was looked upon in Hellenistic times as essentially a power of darkness and evil, who fights against the gods friendly to man with the idea of reducing their ordered world to chaos. Yet the magician avows himself on his side, and even speaks of his name as being able to compel the heavenly gods, to whom he must therefore be superior. Iamblichus tries to explain this, and to refine away the obvious meaning of such spells, but their existence certainly justifies the accusation of trafficking with devils brought by the early Christian Fathers against the practisers of magic.

Another charm may be quoted for the purpose of showing the acquaintance, superficial though it was, with the religions of all nations in the Hellenistic world and the indifference with regard to them which the practice of magic necessitated. It appears in the papyrus in the British Museum last quoted from and is directed to be spoken over "the lamp" which plays so great a part in all magical processes<sup>1</sup>. Of its real or supposed author, Alleius Craeonius, nothing is known :

"A spell of Allêius Craeonius spoken over the lamp. *Óchmarmachô*, the *nourai chrêmillon* sleeping with eyes open, *nia*, Iaô equal-numbered<sup>2</sup> *soumpsênis siasias*, Iaô who shakes the whole inhabited world, come hither unto me and give answer concerning the work [*i.e.* the

*de Mysteriis*, Bk iv. c. 7. A good instance is given by Maspero, "Sur deux Tabellae Devotionis" in *Ét. Égyptol.* 1893, t. II. p. 297, where a magician threatens, if his prayer be not granted, to go down into the secret places of Osiris and destroy his shroud.

<sup>1</sup> Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, pp. 79-81.

<sup>2</sup> Or isopsephic, *i.e.* composed of letters having an equal numerical value. One of the many forms of juggling with words and letters current in the early Christian centuries. The "number of the beast" in Revelation xiii. 18. where, as is now generally admitted, 666 covers the name of Nero Caesar which has that numerical value in Hebrew, is the most familiar instance. Other instances can be found in the Epistle of Barnabas, c. 9, Hilgenfeld, *N.T. extra Canonem receptum*, Lips. 1884, and Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk vi. c. 48, p. 318, Cruice.

matter in hand] *kototh phouphnoun noueboué* in the place prepared for thy reception [?]. Take an inscription<sup>1</sup> with on the obverse Sarapis seated holding the royal sceptre of Egypt and upon the sceptre an ibis. On the reverse of the stone, carve the name and shut it up and keep it for use. Take the ring in your left hand, and a branch of olive and laurel in your right, shaking it over the lamp<sup>2</sup>, at the same time uttering the spell seven times. And, having put it (the ring) upon the Idaean finger<sup>3</sup> of your left hand, facing and turning inwards [Qy. away from the door of the chamber ?] and having fastened the stone to your left ear, lie down to sleep returning no answer to any who may speak to you :

“ ‘ I invoke thee who created the earth and the rocks [*lit.* the bones] and all flesh and spirit and established the sea, and shakes the heavens and did divide the light from the darkness, the great ordering mind, who disposes all, the everlasting eye, Demon of Demons, God of Gods, the Lord of Spirits, the unwandering Æon. Iao ouêi [Jehovah ?] hearken unto my voice. I invoke thee the ruler of the gods, high-thundering Zeus, O king Zeus Adonai, O Lord Jehovah [?]. I am he who invokes thee in the Syrian tongue as the great god *Zaalaêr iphphou*<sup>4</sup> and do thou not disregard the sound in Hebrew *ablanathanalba*<sup>5</sup> *abrasilôa*. For I am *silthachôouch laïlam blasalôth* Iao ieô *nebuth sabiothar bôth arbath iao* Iaoth Sabaoth *patourê zagourê Baruch adonai elôai iabraam*<sup>6</sup> *barbarauô nausiph*, lofty-minded, everliving, having the diadem of the whole ordered world, *siepe saktietê* of life (twice) *sphê nousi* (twice) *sietho* (twice). *Chthethônirinch ôlaêlôl aôê Iao asial Sarapêolsô ethmourêsini sem lau lou lurinch.*’

<sup>1</sup> The context shows that a scarab set in a ring is indicated.

<sup>2</sup> A rude drawing representing the magician in this attitude often appears in the margin of papyri such as that quoted in the text. See Wessely, *Griech. Zauberp.* p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Doubtless the index, because the Idaean Dactyli were said to be the first of men.

<sup>4</sup> This seems to be a corruption of some name like Baal-zephon. The confusion of ζ for β in these papyri is very common.

<sup>5</sup> A Hebrew name meaning “Thou art our father.” It was thought especially valuable because it could be read either way.

<sup>6</sup> Of these words, *Iaoth Sabaoth* is “Jehovah of hosts”; *patoure zagoure*, “who openeth and shutteth” (cf. Revelation i. 8); *Baruch adonai eloi iabraam*, “Blessed be the Lord God of Abraham.” All are fairly good Hebrew not very much corrupted.

“ This spell loosens chains, blinds, brings dreams, causes favours, and may be used for any purposes you wish.”

In this spell, we have Zeus and Yahweh associated with Serapis in the apparent belief that all three were the same god. Although the magician parades his learning by using the name of one of the Syrian Baals, and it is possible that some of the unintelligible words of the invocation may be much corrupted Egyptian, he is evidently well acquainted with Hebrew, and one of the phrases used seems to be taken from some Hebrew ritual. It is hardly likely that he would have done this unless he were himself of Jewish blood ; and we have therefore the fact that a Jewish magician was content to address his national god as Zeus and to make use of a “ graven image ” of him under the figure of the Graeco-Egyptian Serapis in direct contravention of the most stringent clauses in the Law of Moses. A more striking instance of the way in which magicians of the time borrowed from all religions could hardly be imagined.

The uncertain date of the charms under discussion prevent any very cogent argument as to their authorship being drawn from them ; but there are other grounds for supposing that the use of magic was never so wide-spread as in the last three centuries before and the first three centuries after the birth of Christ, and that this was mainly due to the influx of Orientals into the West. One of the indirect effects of Alexander’s conquests was, by substituting Greek kings for the native rulers who had till then governed the countries lying round the Nile and the Euphrates, to break up the priestly colleges there established, and thus to set free a great quantity of the lower class of priests and temple-servants who seem to have wandered through the Hellenistic world, selling their knowledge of curious arts, and seeking from the credulity of their fellows the toilless livelihood that they had till then enjoyed at the expense of the state. The names given to the most famous of these charlatans in the early Roman Empire—Petosiris, Nechepso, Astrampsuchos<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Astrampsuchos appears, oddly enough, as the name of one of the celestial guardians of a heaven in one of the documents of the Bodleian Bruce Papyrus which is described in Chap. X, *infra*. See Amélineau, *Le*

and Ostanēs<sup>1</sup>—are in themselves sufficient to show their origin; and “Chaldaicus” passed into the common language of the time as the recognized expression for the professional exponent of curious arts. Even in the time of Sulla there seems to have been no lack of persons who, if not magicians, were at all events professional diviners capable of interpreting the Dictator’s dreams<sup>2</sup>, and the writers of the Augustan age allude frequently to magic, such as that taught by the papyri just quoted, as being generally the pursuit of foreigners. The Thessalian magicians are as celebrated in the Roman times which Apuleius describes as in those of Theocritus. The Canidia or Gratidia of Horace had also a Thessalian who assisted her in her incantations<sup>3</sup>. But these, like the Chaldaean and Egyptian sorcerers just mentioned, were at the head of their profession, and in many cases made large sums out of the sale of their services. The taste for magic of the poorer classes, slaves, and freedmen, was catered for by the crowd of itinerant magicians, among whom the Jews (and Jewesses) seem to have been the most numerous, who used to hang about the Circus Maximus<sup>4</sup>. Renan is doubtless perfectly right when he says that never were the Mathematici, the Chaldaei, and the Goetae of all kinds so abundant as in the Rome of Nero<sup>5</sup>. Their prevalence in the great cities of the eastern provinces of the Empire may be judged from the frequency of their mention in the New Testament<sup>6</sup>.

It would, of course, be very easy to consider all such practices as the result of deliberate and conscious imposture. This is

*Papyrus Gnostique Bruce*, Paris, p. 109, who transcribes it *Etrempsuchos*, while Schmidt (*Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*, Leipzig, 1905, Bd. I. p. 345) writes *Strempsuchos*. Hippolytus gives the name as that of one of the Powers worshipped by the Peratae, *v. Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 14, p. 196, Cruice.

<sup>1</sup> M. Maspero contends that this name is a corruption of an epithet of Thoth. See *Ét. Égyptol.* v. p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> See Plutarch, *Sulla*, *passim*, especially cc. ix. xxviii. and xxxvii. from which last it appears that he consulted “the Chaldaeans.”

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Epode*, v.

<sup>4</sup> Juvenal, *Sat.* vi.

<sup>5</sup> Renan, *L’Antéchrist*, Paris, 1873, p. 28, n. 4, for authorities.

<sup>6</sup> Acts xiii. 8; *ibid.* xix. 13–19. Cf. Renan, *op. cit.* p. 421.



the course taken by Hippolytus in the *Philosophumena*, in which the heresiologist bishop gives a description of the tricks of the conjurors of the IIIrd century accompanied by rationalistic explanations which sometimes make a greater demand on the credulity of the readers than the wonders narrated<sup>1</sup>. These tricks he accuses the leaders of the Gnostics of his time of learning and imitating, and the accusation is therefore plainly dictated by the theological habit of attempting by any means to discredit the morals of those who dissent from the writer's own religious opinions<sup>2</sup>. But a study of the magic papyri themselves by no means supports this theory of conscious imposture. The spells therein given were evidently written for the use of a professional magician, and seem to have been in constant employment. Many of them bear after them the note written in the hand of the scribe that he has tested them and found them efficacious. The pains, too, which the author takes to give variations of the process recommended in them—as for example in the quotations from a “man of Heracleopolis” in the first of the spells given above—all show that he had a more or less honest belief in the efficacy of the spells he is transcribing. The recording in the same papyri of what would be now called “trade secrets” such as recipes for the manufacture of ink all point the same way, and go to confirm the view that the magicians who made use of them, although willing to sell their supposed powers over the supernatural world for money, yet believed that they really possessed them.

This is the more likely to be true because many of the phenomena which these spells are intended to produce are what would now be called hypnotic. The gods and demons invoked are supposed to appear sometimes in dreams, but more generally to a virgin boy gazing fixedly either at a lamp or at the shining

<sup>1</sup> Book iv. c. 4, *passim*, especially the device for making sheep cut off their own heads by rubbing their necks against a sword, or for producing an earthquake by burning upon coals the dung of an ichneumon mixed with magnetic ore (pp. 99, 111, Cruice). Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. 43, accuses the Gnostics of frequenting magicians and astrologers.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophumena*, Bk iv. c. 15, pp. 112, 113, Cruice.

surface of a liquid. This is, of course, the form of "crystal-gazing" or divination by the ink-pool still used throughout the East, a graphic description of which is given in Lane's *Modern Egyptians*<sup>1</sup>. In this case as in the charms for the healing of disease—especially of epilepsy and other nervous maladies—given in the same papyri, the active agent seems to be the power of suggestion, consciously or unconsciously exercised by the operator or magician. A full but popular explanation of these phenomena from the standpoint of modern science will be found in the lectures on "Hypnotisme et Spiritisme" delivered at Geneva by Dr Émile Yung in 1890<sup>2</sup>, while the subject has been treated more learnedly and at greater length by a great number of writers, among whom may be specially mentioned M. Pierre Janet<sup>3</sup>, the successor and continuator of the researches of the celebrated Charcot at the Salpêtrière.

The influence that such practices exercised upon the development of the post-Christian sects or schools generally classed together under the name of Gnostic is not very clearly defined. It may, indeed, be said that the great diffusion of the magical rites that took place during the centuries immediately preceding, as in those immediately following, the birth of Christ, predisposed men's minds to the search for a cosmogony or theory of the universe which should account for its evolution as part of an orderly and well-devised system rather than as the capricious and, as it were, incoherent creation of the gods. That some such force was at work may be gathered from the fact that magical beliefs and practices seem to have crept into the religion of the whole civilized world at this period. But that the schools calling themselves Gnostic owed their development directly or exclusively to them is an idea that must be repudiated. Hippolytus, as has been said, does, indeed, make some such charge, but only in general terms and without any evidence in its support. When later he goes through the sects *seriatim*, he only reiterates it in the cases of Simon Magus, of

<sup>1</sup> Paisley, 1896, pp. 277–284.

<sup>2</sup> *Hypnotisme et Spiritisme*, Genève, 1890, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, Paris, 1899, *passim*.

his successor Menander, and of Carpocrates of Antioch ; and it is probable from the context that in all these cases he is only referring to what seemed to him the superstitious attention paid by the " heretics " in question to the externals of worship, such as the use of pictures and statues, lights and incense, which seem in many cases to have been borrowed directly from paganism.

This attention to the details of ritual, however, did in itself contain the germ of a danger to the survival of any organized cult in which it was present in excess, which was to receive full illustration in the later forms of Egyptian Gnosticism properly so-called. As will be shown in its place, the seed of Gnosticism fell in Egypt upon soil encumbered with the débris of many older faiths which had long since passed into the stage of decay. Nor could the earnestness or the philosophic insight of the great Gnostics of Hadrian's time, who started their propaganda from Alexandria, contend for long with the inherited preconceptions of a degraded and stubborn peasantry who had learned for millennia to regard all religion as sorcery. Here Gnosticism degenerated quickly into magic of the least enlightened and basest kind, and thus lost all right to be considered in any sense a religion<sup>1</sup>. The case was different in other parts of the Roman Empire, where a better intellectual equipment and the practical syncretism or fusion of worships offered more favourable ground for the development of new faiths not appealing to the members of one nationality only.

That this idea of Gnosticism or of the importance of knowledge—were it only the knowledge of charms and spells—in dealing with the spiritual and invisible world was bound to play a prominent part in the evolution of the world-religions which Alexander's conquests had rendered possible is therefore evident. Some writers have gone further and have declared that Christianity itself may be " only an episode—though a very important episode—in the history of Gnosticism<sup>2</sup>." But

<sup>1</sup> This is treated more fully in Chap. X, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Cerinthus and the Gnostics" in the *London Quarterly*, Oct. 1886, p. 132.

to say this, as will presently be shown, is to go too far, and Christianity, although she obtained many converts from those Gnostic sects with which the Church of the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages found itself in competition<sup>1</sup>, yet proved in the long run to be the most bitter enemy of Gnosticism. From the first, the Catholic Church seems to have recognized that the ideas which lay at the root of Gnosticism—to which word I have ventured here to give a meaning more extended than that which it connotes in heresiological writers—were opposed to religion altogether; and if allowed to triumph would have had their end in the development of a science, which, if not absolutely atheistic, would at least reduce the necessary action of the spiritual world upon this to the vanishing point<sup>2</sup>. It would indeed be quite possible to argue that such ideas must always appear when a people of inferior culture, but of vigorous intellect, come into frequent contact for the first time with a material civilization higher than their own. It is sufficient for the present purpose to have shown that they were widely spread during the centuries which immediately preceded the appearance of Christianity, and that they count for something in the evolution of the many heretical sects who came to trouble most seriously the peace of the Catholic Church in the early centuries of our era. The same causes, however, must have been at work some time before, and it is impossible to explain some of the features of Gnosticism in its more extended sense without going back to an early period of Greek history. For it was in Greece that the Orphic teaching first appeared, and it is to this that most of the post-Christian Gnostic heresies or sects attributed, not untruly, their own origin.

Connected in practice with, yet entirely different in origin

<sup>1</sup> Thus Epiphanius had been a Nicolaitan, St Ambrose of Milan a Valentinian, and St Augustine a Manichæan before joining the Catholic Church.

<sup>2</sup> So Hippolytus objects not only to the astrology of his time, but to the arithmetical calculations on which it was professedly based. The estimates attributed to Archimedes of the relative distances of the earth from the sun, moon and planets are marked out by him for special condemnation. Cf. *Philosophumena*, Bk IV. c. 1, pp. 67-76, Cruice.

from, this magic was the astrology or star-lore which after the conquest of the Euphrates valley by the Persians began to make its way westwards. It would seem that its birthplace was the plains of Chaldaea, where the clear air brings the starry expanse of the sky nearer, as it were, to the observer than in the denser and more cloudy atmosphere of Europe, while the absence of rising ground not only enables him to take in the whole heaven at a glance, but gives him a more lively idea of the importance of the heavenly bodies. There the careful and patient observation of the Sumerian priests at a period which was certainly earlier than Sargon of Akkad (*i.e.* 2750 B.C.) established the fact that certain groups of stars appeared and disappeared at regular intervals, that others moved more swiftly than their fellows, and that the places of both with reference to the apparent path of the sun varied in a way which corresponded with the recurrence of the seasons. Primitive man, however, does not distinguish between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*, or rather he assumes unhesitatingly that, if any natural phenomenon occurs with anything like regularity after another, the first is the cause of the second. Hence the swifter stars soon came to be clothed in the minds of the early astronomers with attributes varying with the phenomena of which they were supposed to be the cause. Thus, the planet or "wandering" star which we call Jupiter came to be known as the "god of good winds," the Hyades and Pleiades were looked upon as the bringers of rain, and the stars whose appearance ushered in the cold and darkness of winter were considered as hostile to man<sup>1</sup>. As time progressed, however, these observations accumulated—largely, one would think, because of the imperishable material on which they were recorded—and it then began to be perceived that the movement of the heavenly bodies were not due to their individual caprice or will, but were dictated by an inexorable and unchangeable law. In the drawing of this conclusion, the patient and logical mind of the Mongoloid inhabitants of Sumer, ever mindful at once of the past and the future of the race, no doubt played its full part.

<sup>1</sup> P. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, Strassburg, 1890, pp. 140 *sqq.* and especially p. 295.

The effect of this change in the mental attitude of man towards the universe was to introduce an entirely new conception into religion. At first the Babylonians, pushing, as man generally does, the application of their last discovery further than the facts would warrant, declared that all events happened in a regular and prearranged order; and that man could therefore predict the happening of any event directly he knew its place in the series. Thus in the "astrological" tablets preserved in the palace of Assur-banipal at Nineveh, some of which certainly go back to the reign of Sargon of Akkad<sup>1</sup>, we read:

"In the month of Nisan 2nd day, Venus appeared at sunrise. There will be distress in the land....An eclipse happening on the 15th day, the king of Dilmun is slain, and someone seizes his throne....An eclipse happening on the 15th day of the month Ab the king dies, and rains descend from heaven, and floods fill the canals....An eclipse happening on the 20th day, the king of the Hittites in person seizes the throne....For the 5th month an eclipse on the 14th day portends rains and the flooding of canals. The crops will be good, and king will send peace to king. An eclipse on the 15th day portends destructive war. The land will be filled with corpses. An eclipse on the 16th day indicates that pregnant women will be happily delivered of their offspring. An eclipse on the 20th day portends that lions will cause terror and that reptiles will appear; an eclipse on the 21st day that destruction will overtake the riches of the sea<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> See the tablets made for this king and published by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. III. Many of these are translated by Sayce in "The Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians," *Trans. Soc. Bibl. Arch.* vol. III. (1874), pp. 145-339. I have taken the lowest date for Sargon, on the authority of Mr King, *Chronicles of Early Babylonian Kings*, 1907, I. p. 17, although the well-known text of Nabonidus would make him a thousand years earlier. The origin of Babylonian astronomy is discussed by Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, chap. XXIII. The immense antiquity attributed to the Babylonian observations by the classical authorities quoted in Sayce's paper may be considerably reduced if we substitute lunar for solar years; yet there seems little doubt that the star worship which arose from them went back to the "oldest period of Babylonia." Cf. Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*, 1902, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 365 *sqq.*

These events are evidently predicted from a knowledge of what happened immediately after the occurrence of former eclipses and other celestial phenomena, and it is perhaps characteristic of the lot of man that most of them are unfavourable and that the disasters greatly outnumber the good things. But it is plain that as time went on, the observers of the stars would begin to perceive that even such unusual celestial phenomena as eclipses occurred at intervals which, although long compared with the lifetime of a man, could yet be estimated, and that the element of chance or caprice could therefore be in great measure eliminated from their calculation. Then came about the construction of the calendar, and the formation of tables extending over a long series of years, by which the recurrence of eclipses and the like could be predicted a long time in advance. All this tended to the formation of different ideas of the laws which, it was now seen, governed man's life, and the shape which these now took were equally erroneous, although at first sight more rational than those held by the first observers.

This new idea was in effect that system of "correspondences" which occupied a prominent place in nearly all religious systems from the time of Assyria's apogee to the triumph of Christianity, and which through the mediaeval Cabala may be said to retain to the present day some shadow of its former power over the minds of the superstitious. This was the notion that the earth in effect is only a copy of the heavens, and that the events which happen here below are nothing but a copy of those which are taking place above<sup>1</sup>. If any great catastrophe such as the fall of an empire like that of Assyria or the sudden death of a man distinguished above his fellows like Alexander occurs, it is because of some conjunction or meeting of hostile stars ;

<sup>1</sup> Among modern German archaeologists Winckler and Jeremias have pushed the effect of this "astral theory" of the universe beyond all limits. Their position is at once exposed and refuted by Rogers in *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, 1908, pp. 212 to end. Yet such a view of the universe as is given in the text was undoubtedly held by many during the six centuries here treated of, and can be seen as it were underlying most of the religions of the time. That it had its origin in Babylonia seems most probable. See Cumont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, 1912, pp. 1-26, and authorities there quoted.

and if some great and unexpected benefit such as universal peace or an abundant harvest smiles upon mankind, it is because those stars most generally favourable to him have recovered temporary sway. The result was a sort of mapping-out of the heavens into regions corresponding to those of the earth, and the assigning of a terrestrial "sphere of influence" to each<sup>1</sup>. But as the predictions made from these alone would have been too speedily and too evidently falsified in most cases by the march of events, it became necessary to attribute a predominant influence to the planets, whose swifter and more irregular movements introduced new factors into the situation. These planets were decided to be seven in number, Uranus and Neptune not having yet been discovered, and the Sun and Moon being included in the list because they were thought like the others to move round the earth. Hence all terrestrial things were assumed to be divided into seven categories corresponding to the seven planets, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, the Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and to be in an especial way under the influence of the heavenly bodies of which they were the earthly representatives.

Into the details of the so-called science of astrology thus founded, it is not our purpose to enter. To do so would occupy a greater space than is at our disposal, and would involve besides the discussion of a great many documents only just beginning to come to light, and the exact meaning of which is still uncertain<sup>2</sup>. But it may be mentioned here that astrology entirely changed its character when it came into contact with the dawning science of mathematics, which is perhaps the most enduring monument which bears witness to the fertility and inventiveness of the Greek mind. So soon as the observations of the Babylonians were placed at their disposal, the Greek

<sup>1</sup> Cumont (work last quoted), p. 18. The idea appears plainly enough in astrological works like Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*. It was not confined to Babylonia, for the Egyptians thought the earthly Nile corresponded to a heavenly one.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont's *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* of which 10 volumes have been published will be of great use in this respect. See also Kroll's *Vettii Valentis Anthologiarum Libri*, 1908.



mathematicians set to work in real earnest to discover the laws of the universe and established the science of astronomy pretty much on the basis on which it stands at the present day. The discovery of the Metonic cycle, of the trigonometrical method of measuring the celestial sphere, and of the precession of the equinoxes all followed in succession, and the prediction of eclipses, conjunctions of stars, and other celestial phenomena which had before been more or less a matter of guesswork, now became a matter of calculation presenting no mystery to anyone versed in mathematics. The heavens were mapped out, the stars catalogued, and tables were produced which enabled the place of any particular star to be found at a given moment without the actual inspection of the heavens<sup>1</sup>.

The result of this improved state of things was not long in reacting both upon religion, and its congener, magic. On the first of these, the effect was much the same as that produced by the discoveries of Copernicus in the xvth century and those of Darwin in the xixth. We do not know enough of the history of thought at the time to be aware if the Greek additions to the ascertained laws of Nature aroused the same resentment in priestly minds as did those of the Prussian and the English philosophers; but it is evident that if they did so, the quarrel was speedily made up. Every religion in the Graeco-Roman world which sought the popular favour after the discoveries of Hipparchus, took note of the seven planetary spheres which the geocentric theory of the universe supposed to surround the earth, and even those known before his time, like Zoroastrianism and Judaism, hastened to adopt the same view of the universe, and to modify the details of their teaching to accord with it. The seven stoles of Isis are as significant in this respect as the seven-stepped ladder or the seven altars in the mysteries of Mithras, while the seven Amshaspands of the Avesta and the attention paid to the seven days of the week by the Jews go to show how even the most firmly held national traditions had to bow before it. As for magic, the sevenfold division of things

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *Astrology and Rel.* pp. 12, 13. Cf. Theon of Alexandria's *Commentary on the IIIrd book of the Almagest* (Abbé Halma's ed.), 1813, t. I. p. 1.

which implied that each planet had its own special metal, precious stone, animal, and plant, placed at the disposal of the magicians an entirely new mode of compulsion which lent itself to endless combinations; while, for the same reason, special conjurations were supposed, as we have seen, only to exercise their full influence under certain positions of the stars. Perhaps the climax of this state of things is reached in one of the Gnostic documents described later, where the salvation of Christian souls in the next world is said to be determined by the entry of one of the beneficent planets into one or other of the signs of the Zodiac<sup>1</sup>.

One of the most important results of this impulse was the sudden importance thus given to the worship of the material sun, which henceforth forms the centre of adoration in all non-Christian religions. As we have seen, in the worship of Isis, the newly-made initiate was made to personify the daystar in the public, as no doubt he had done in the secret, ceremonies of the cult. All the post-Alexandrian legends of the gods were turned the same way, and Serapis, Mithras, Attis were all identified with the sun, whom philosophers like Pliny and Macrobius declared to be the one supreme god concealed behind the innumerable lesser deities of the Graeco-Roman pantheon<sup>2</sup>. Even the Christians could not long hold out against the flood, and the marks of the compromise to which the Catholic Church came in the matter may perhaps be seen in the coincidence of the Lord's Day with Sunday and the Church's adoption of the 25th day of December, the birthday of the Unconquered Sun-God, as the anniversary of the birth of Christ<sup>3</sup>. It is certainly by no accident that the emperors whose reigns immediately preceded the establishment of Christianity all turned towards the worship of the sun-god who was looked upon as

<sup>1</sup> In the *Pistis Sophia* (for which see Chapter X, *infra*) the soul of a sinless man who has not found the mysteries has to wait until the planets Jupiter and Venus come into a certain aspect with the sun, "Saturn and Mars being behind them." It is then reincarnated and wins for itself life eternal, pp. 387, 389 (Copt.).

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, *N.H.* Bk II. c. 4. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, Bk I. cc. 18-23.

<sup>3</sup> Goblet d'Alviella in *Rev. Hist. Rel.* LXV. (May-June, 1912), p. 381.

the peculiar divinity of the family to which Constantine belonged<sup>1</sup>.

To Gnosticism, whether we use the word in the sense in which it has been used in this chapter, or in its more restricted connotation as the generic name of the earlier heresies which afflicted the nascent Church, the development of astrology came as a source of new life. Henceforth to the knowledge of the history of the personal dispositions and of the designs of the gods, had to be added that of the laws governing the movements of the stars. Moreover, the new theory introduced into Gnosticism an element which had hitherto been foreign to it, which was the idea of destiny or of predetermined fate<sup>2</sup>. If all things, as the astrologers said, happened in a certain regular order of which the movements of the stars were at once the cause and the symbol, it follows that their course is determined beforehand, and may possibly be capable of being ascertained by man. Hence came in all the ideas as to the predestination of certain souls to happiness and of others to misery both in this world and the next, which play such an important part in the religions of the centuries under consideration, and the influence of which is by no means extinct at the present day. It is true that, as M. Cumont has recently pointed out, man is never rigidly true to his beliefs, and has generally invented some compromise by which either the favour of the gods or his own conduct is supposed to free him from the worst effects of a predetermined fate. Such compromises appear furtively here and there in Christian Gnosticism, but without sufficient prominence to take away the effect of the general notion that man's fate in the next world is determined before his birth in this.

The general effect of these considerations is, it is thought, that the Gnosticism which came to trouble the peace of the Christian Church during its infancy and adolescence had its

<sup>1</sup> Aurelian and Diocletian each instituted a worship of the sun-god, the deity of the second Flavian family.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Astrology and Rel.* pp. 28, 29. He is probably right when he points out that irregular phenomena like comets and shooting stars gave a loophole for the opponents of a rigid predestinarianism of which they were not slow to avail themselves.

roots, first in the decay of the earlier faith, which showed itself in the popular taste for cosmogonical and other myths, until then wholly or partly absent from the ideas of the more civilized nations of the Persian Empire. On the top of this, came the great spread of ceremonial magic which seems to have followed the first introduction of something like upright and just government by the Aryan conquerors of the East; and then the idea of a universe ruled not by the unchecked will of capricious gods, but by the regular and ordered movement of the stars. The predestinarian view of the fate of the individual which naturally follows from this last conception, as has just been said, was subject to exceptions and compromises, but yet appears as a kind of background or framework to all the religions (orthodox Christianity excepted) which came into prominence during the six centuries to which our survey is limited. But before dealing with those hitherto unnoticed, it is necessary that we should glance at those pre-Christian forms of Gnosticism, the earliest of which was perhaps that which appeared simultaneously in most parts of the Greek world at the beginning of the vth century before Christ and is generally known as Orphism.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRE-CHRISTIAN Gnostics : THE ORPHICI

ALL scholars seem now agreed that the legendary Orpheus never really existed<sup>1</sup>, and that the many verses and poems attributed to him were the work of various hands, one of the earliest of their authors being Onomacritos of Athens, who fled with the Pisistratids to the court of Xerxes at Susa in the first decade of the 7th century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Yet there is little doubt that the peculiar myths alluded to in these poems were known at an early date in Crete, whence they probably found their way into Athens with Epimenides, the Cretan wizard or wise man who was sent for to purify the city from the guilt incurred by the murder of Cylon<sup>3</sup>. This event evidently marks a turning on the part of the Greeks towards purifications and other magical rites unknown in Homer's time<sup>4</sup>; but the tendency,

<sup>1</sup> Lobeck in his *Aglaophamus*, Königsberg, 1829, vol. i. pp. 233-1104, makes this clear. It was also the opinion of Aristotle according to Cicero (*de Nat. Deor.* Bk I. c. 38). Other authorities are collected by Purser in his article "Orphica" in Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, 1890, vol. II. who quotes with approval Preller's remark that Orpheus was "eine litterarische Collectivperson." See also Paul Monceaux in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq. s.v.* Orphica.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, Bk VII. c. 6. Tatian, *adv. Graecos*, c. XLII; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 21; Sext. Emp. *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* III. p. 115 B. Cf. Purser, *art. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, Eng. ed. vol. I. pp. 308, 309; and authorities quoted by O. Kern, *de Orphei, Epimenidis Pherecydis Theogoniis*, Berlin, 1888, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> The first mention of such rites is said to have been made by Arctinus of Miletus in his *Æthiopsis*, where he describes Ulysses as purifying Achilles for the murder of Thersites. See Grote's *History of Greece*, 4th ed. vol. I. pp. 23, 24.

to whomever due in the first instance, undoubtedly received a great impulse from the break-up of the Pythagorean school in Italy about 500 B.C.<sup>1</sup> This event, which in its effects may be compared to the dispersion of the priestly corporations of Babylon and Egypt which followed Alexander's conquests, sent wandering a great number of speculative philosophers trained in the formation of associations for political and other purposes, and they probably joined forces with a previously existing Orphic sect, nearly all the early Orphic poems being ascribed, with more or less likelihood, to Pythagoreans<sup>2</sup>. There are certain features in these poems which, if we met with them after the reform of the Zoroastrian religion by the Sassanian kings, we should certainly attribute to Persian influence; but this can hardly be done so long as we remain ignorant of what the Persian religion was in the time of the Achaemenides. The most probable account of the matter is that the religious teaching attributed to Orpheus was of Asiatic and particularly of Phrygian provenance, that it had long been current in Crete and the other islands of the Mediterranean, that a part of it came into Greece through Thrace in the time of the Pisistratids, and that it was finally put into an organized and consistent shape by those Pythagorean philosophers who made their way back to Greece after the overthrow of their political power in Magna Graecia<sup>3</sup>. It found in Pindar a warm adherent, and was well known to and spoken of with reverence by the three great

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Müller, *op. cit.* I. pp. 310, 311.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 21.

<sup>3</sup> The search for its original home seems hopeless at present. It might easily be connected with Babylonian beliefs, and the Orphic Dionysos has too many features in common with Tammuz, the lover of Ishtar, for the resemblance to be entirely accidental. But other elements in the story, such as the mundane egg, are found in the Vedas, and may point to an Indian origin. The discovery a few years ago at Boghaz Keui in Cilicia of inscriptions showing that the Vedic gods were worshipped in Asia Minor at least as early as 1270 B.C., makes it very difficult to say whether the Vedic gods may not have reached India from Asia Minor or *vice versa*. In this case, it is possible that Onomaeritos may have learned some of the legends at the Court of the Great King at Susa.

tragic poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides<sup>1</sup>. Its greatest influence, however, was probably exerted through the Eleusinian and other mysteries which it captured and transformed. It continued to dominate them from before the time of Herodotus down to the prohibition of these secret rites by the Christian emperors, and Orpheus was thus said by everyone to be their founder<sup>2</sup>.

The whole of this teaching centred round the legend of Dionysos who is described by Herodotus as the youngest—that is to say the last-adopted—of the great gods of Greece<sup>3</sup>. This Orphic Dionysos was the Cretan form of the god worshipped all round the Mediterranean, who was always represented in human form, and as suffering a violent death and then rising again from the dead. But to this nucleus, the Orphic poets added at different times and by degrees a great quantity of other myths which together formed a complete body of doctrine setting forth the origin of the world, and of man, and his life after death. First, they said, existed Chronos or Time “who grows not old,” from whom sprang Aether and the formless Chaos. From these was formed a silver egg which, bursting in due time, disclosed Eros, or Phanes the first born, a shining god, with wings upon his shoulders, at once male and female, and having within himself the seeds of all creatures. Phanes creates the Sun and Moon and also Night, and from Night begets Uranos and Gaea (Heaven and Earth). These two give birth to the Titans, among whom is Kronos, who emasculates his father Uranos and succeeds to his throne. He is in turn deposed by Zeus, who swallows Phanes, and thus becomes the father of gods and men<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, *Isthm.* vi. i. 3; Aeschyl. *Sisyphus Drapetes*, fr. 242 of Didot; Sophocles, *Antigone*, ll. 1121 *sqq.*; Euripides, *Rhesus*, ll. 942 *sqq.* Cf. Döllinger, *Jud. und Heid.* Eng. ed. vol. i. p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Demosthenes, *adv. Aristog.* i. p. 773. Cf. Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, ii. p. 320; Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Antiq. s.v.* Orphica and Eleusinia, for other authorities.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, Bk II. cc. 145, 146.

<sup>4</sup> This is the “Theogony of the Rhapsodists,” which seems to have been the most popular of all the Orphic theogonies. The different texts in which

This part of the Orphic story comes to us almost entirely from Neo-Platonic sources, and possesses several variants. It is so manifestly an attempt to reconcile the popular theology of Greece found in Homer and Hesiod with different Oriental ideas of the origin of the world that we might consider it to have been concocted in post-Christian times, were it not that Aristophanes had evidently heard about Chaos and the mundane egg, and its production of Eros and Night, which confused genealogy he burlesques in *The Birds*<sup>1</sup>. It is probable also, as Alfred Maury pointed out, that this legend was first taken by the Orphics from the philosophers of Ionia, and especially from that Pherecydes of Syros who is said to have been Pythagoras' master<sup>2</sup>. Attempts have been made to derive it from Indian, Egyptian, Chaldaean, and even Jewish sources; but its resemblances to parallel beliefs among some or all of these nations are too few and sparse for any useful conclusion to be drawn from them. One of its most marked features is its succession of divine rulers of the universe, which the Orphics made use of to exalt their own god Dionysos to the highest rank. The story they told of this Dionysos was that he was originally the Phanes whom Zeus swallowed, but that at his second birth he became the offspring of Zeus by Persephone, the daughter whom Zeus had himself begotten on one of the earth-goddesses who is sometimes called Rhea, sometimes Cybele, and sometimes Demeter. Persephone, described by the Orphics as the "especial" or "single" daughter of Zeus<sup>3</sup>, was seduced by her father in

it is preserved have been collected by Abel, *Orphica*, Lips. 1885, pp. 48-140. It is well summarized by Purser in Smith's *Dict. of Antiq.* where before quoted. Cf. Daremberg and Saglio, *s.v.* Orpheus.

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Aves*, ll. 691-706.

<sup>2</sup> *Religions de la Grèce*, t. III. p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> *Μονογένηια*. See Orphic Hymn on p. 142, *infra*. Persephone has also Zeus for her father in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, l. 396. The epithet cannot imply that she was his only daughter, as he had other daughters among the Homeric gods, such as Athena and Aphrodite, but rather that she was "unique," or one of a kind. The mistaking of the word *Μονογενής* for *μονογέννητος* by Christian and Jewish writers has led to much confusion; and Renan (*L'Église Chrétienne*, Paris, 1879, p. 200, n. 2) notes that George the Syncellus calls Bar Coziba, the Jewish Messiah,



the form of a serpent, and in due course brought to light Dionysos, sometimes called Zagreus or "the Hunter." This god, who had the horns of a bull<sup>1</sup>, became the darling of his father, who destined him for his successor and allowed him, while yet a child, to sit on his throne and to wield the thunderbolts<sup>2</sup>. But the Titans, the monstrous sons of Earth, either spurred on by jealousy at the child being given the sovereignty of the world, or incited thereto by Hera, laid a plot for his destruction. Beguiling him with childish toys such as a top, a hoop, and a mirror, they stole upon him unawares with blackened faces, and, in spite of his struggles and his transformation into many shapes, tore him limb from limb, cooked his several members in a cauldron, and ate them. The heart, however, was saved from them by Pallas Athene, who bore it to Zeus, who swallowed it, and it thus passed into the Theban Dionysos, son of Zeus and Semele, who was in turn Zagreus re-born. Zeus also blasted the Titans with his lightning, while he ordered Apollo to collect the uneaten members of the little god and to bury them at Delphi. A variant or perhaps a continuation of the story makes Demeter, having, as the earth goddess, received the members of the little god, put them together and revivify them, and join herself in marriage with the resuscitated corpse, whence the infant Iacchos is born<sup>3</sup>.

*Μορϋενής*. See the story of the begetting of Persephone which Maury, *op. cit.* III. pp. 321, 322, quotes from Clement of Alexandria and Arnobius. Both authors derive from it the name of Brimo given to Demeter in the Mysteries. Cf. Chap. VIII, *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> Orphic Hymn xxx in Abel's *Orphica*, where he is called "First-begotten, of a double nature, thrice-born, Bacchic king, Hunter, Ineffable One, Hidden One, two horned, and of double form." Cf. his epithet "bull-faced" in Orphic Hymn XLV. So Clement of Alexandria quotes a verse from some unnamed poet that "the bull has begotten a serpent, the serpent a bull," *Protrepit.* c. II.

<sup>2</sup> As in the statue at Megalopolis in Arcadia described by Pausanias, Bk VIII. c. 31, where Polycleitos portrayed the young god with a cup and a *thyrsos*, besides wearing *cothurni*, but with the eagle and the name of Zeus Φαίλος. Ael. Aristides, in *Dionysum*, says that Dionysos is Zeus himself, a doctrine which Justin Martyr, *Cohort.* c. xv, attributes to Orpheus.

<sup>3</sup> The story with full references to authorities is given by Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce Antique*, t. III. pp. 342 sqq.; Purser in Smith's *Dict. of Greek and*

In this part of the story, also, the desire of the authors to fit it in with the existing mythology is manifest. At Eleusis from very early times there had been worshipped with mysterious rites a divine couple who were known only as "the God" and "the Goddess<sup>1</sup>." This pair were, as we may guess from an allusion in Hesiod, otherwise called Zeus Chthonios or the infernal Zeus, god of the underworld, and Demeter<sup>2</sup>, the ancient earth-goddess, who was worshipped with her lover under the various names of Ma, Cybele, Astarte, Rhea and Isis throughout Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt. As the lover of the earth-goddess in all these cases suffered death and resurrection, the Orphics had to work these episodes into the history of their Dionysos Zagreus. But they carried the idea further than any of their predecessors by connecting this death and re-birth with the origin of man and his survival after death<sup>3</sup>. Man,

*Roman Antiquities*, 1890, s.v. Orphica; Cecil Smith, "Orphic Myths on Attic Vases," *J.H.S.* 1890, pp. 343-351; Dyer, *The Gods in Greece*, 1891, p. 128; Paul Monceaux in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq.* s.v. Orphica. The eating of a god or other being in order to obtain possession of the victim's qualities is a common idea among primitive peoples, as is set forth at length in Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 3rd ed. pt v, vol. II. ch. 10. It was familiar to the Egyptians, as is seen in the Pyramid Texts of the vith Dynasty, where the glorified King Unas is represented as chasing, catching, cooking, and eating the gods in the next world in order to assimilate their powers. See Maspero, *Les Pyramides de Saqqarah*, pp. 67 sqq. So in a magic papyrus now at Leyden, the magician threatens the god Set whom he is invoking, that if he is not obedient, he will speak to "the Great God" (Serapis?) who will tear Set "limb from limb and give his powers to a mangy dog sitting on a dung-hill to eat." See Leemans, *Papyri Graeci*, vol. II. pp. 18, 19.

<sup>1</sup> Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* pp. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Foucart, where last quoted; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, l. 465 (p. 39, Didot).

<sup>3</sup> Such ideas may, however, have been current in the religions of the Eastern Mediterranean long before Orphic times. Dr Budge in his book *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, I. p. 28, reiterates what he has before stated elsewhere, i.e. that Osiris was to his worshippers "the god-man, the first of those who rose from the dead," and that his death and resurrection were therefore supposed to be in some way beneficial to mankind. This is very likely, but I know of no Egyptian text that in any way connects the creation of man with the death of Osiris. On the contrary, a text which

they said, was made out of the ashes of the Titans, and was therefore born to sorrow, his soul being buried in his body as in a charnel-house<sup>1</sup>. But he also had within him a spark of the life of Zagreus, the infant ruler of the universe<sup>2</sup>, and this enables him to purify himself from the guilt of the earthborn Titans, and so to leave the circle of existence and cease from wickedness. For that the soul of man after leaving his body went, unless purified, to inhabit the bodies of other men and even animals, passing from one to the other as in a wheel or endless chain, was a dogma which the Orphics had taken over from the Pythagoreans<sup>3</sup>. How now was this purification to be obtained?

The answer that the earlier Orphics gave to this question must have astonished the pleasure-loving and artistic Greeks. The true Orphic, they were told, must make his whole earthly

Dr Budge has himself published makes men and women to come into being from the tears which came forth from the eye of the god Khepera, here probably to be identified with Nu, the primæval Ocean or Deep. See Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, vol. I. p. 299. The Zoroastrian religion, in the late form in which we have it in the *Bundahish* (see West, *S.B.E.* Oxford, 1880, *Pahlavi Texts*, pt I.), does indeed make man spring from the death of Gayomort, the First or Primæval Man, slain by Ahriman. If we choose to suppose that this conception went back to the times of Zoroaster himself, that is to say, about 700 B.C., Onomacritos might easily have found this part of the story at the Court of Susa. Cf. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907, pp. 215-223. It is significant that, according to Pausanias, Bk VIII. c. 37, it was Onomacritos who first made the Titans evil powers, or as he says "contributing to the sufferings of Dionysos."

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* Bk III. c. 3, quotes this expression from "Philolaos the Pythagorean." Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, Bk IV. p. 157 c (Teubner) from "Euxitheus the Pythagoric." It evidently went back to the earliest Orphic teaching reduced to writing.

<sup>2</sup> See Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, I. p. 566, for authorities.

<sup>3</sup> κύκλου τ' ἀλλύσαι καὶ ἀναψύξαι κακότητος. The line is attributed to Orpheus by Simplicius in his Commentary on Aristotle, *de Caelo*, II. p. 168 (ed. Karsten). According to Proclus, in *Plat. Tim.* v. 330 A, B, it was part of a prayer which Orphics used when being initiated in the mysteries of "Demeter and Cora." The Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration and its adoption by the Orphics are well set out by Luebbert in his *Commentatio de Pindaro dogmatis de migratione animarum cultore*, Bonn, 1887, q.v.

life a preparation for the next. He must partake at least once of a mystic sacrifice, in which a living animal was, in memory of the fate of Zagreus, torn in pieces and eaten raw; but thereafter he must never again eat any food that has had life nor even eggs, and he must observe perfect chastity<sup>1</sup>, and wear only linen garments even at his burial, nor must he go near a sepulchre.

“We aim at a holy life, whence I am become a mystes of Idaean [*i.e.* Cretan] Zeus,” says the Orphic in a surviving fragment of Euripides’ *Cretenses*, “and having completed the life of night-wandering Zagreus and the raw flesh-devouring feasts, I uplifted the torches of the mountain mother, and having been purified by expiatory offerings, I was hailed as Bacchus by the Curetes.... But now clothed in white garments, I fly the generation of mortals, and to a corpse I draw not nigh, and I shun the eating of things which have had life<sup>2</sup>.”

The meaning of this is fairly plain and is in everything a great deal more magical than religious. By a well-known rule common to nearly all people in a low state of culture, the victim sacrificed to a god becomes a god himself<sup>3</sup>; and, as the eating of the victim makes him part of the eater, it has the same effect on the votary as the swallowing of Phanes by Zeus had upon this last, the Dionysiac soul in the participant of the sacrifice is thereby strengthened, and he becomes so far identified with the god as to bear his name. Henceforth, however, he must have no further dealings with Titanic matter, and in particular must shun the corpse which represents the Titanic part of man without the Dionysiac, and must do nothing which can start

<sup>1</sup> All these prohibitions persisted, and we meet with them in nearly all the religions hereafter described including the Manichaean. The filiation may well be direct, as such sects as the Valentinians grew up in an atmosphere of Orphic teaching. If, however, it should appear that the Orphic notions on this subject were derived from some Western Asiatic source, it is plain that the Ophites and Manichaeans may have drawn theirs from the same fount and independently.

<sup>2</sup> Euripides, *Cretenses*, p. 733 (Didot). The fragment is found in Porphyry, *de Abstemientia*, Bk iv. c. 19. Cf. Euripides, *Hippolytus*, l. 952.

<sup>3</sup> See Frazer and Maspero as quoted in note 3 p. 125, *supra*.

another being on "the ceaseless round of changing existences<sup>1</sup>." If he were successful in observing these austerities to the end, he might hope that, when his soul was released from its prison house, it would be reunited to Dionysos, and rest for ever free from the stains of matter. This was in effect the formal teaching of Pythagoras with regard to the transmigration of souls, and depended on the view that the soul, or incorporeal part of man, had once formed part of the soul of the universe diffused throughout Nature. "I have heard," says Cicero, "that Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans...never doubted but that we possess minds plucked from the universal divine mind"; a phrase that he explains in discussing the nature of the gods by saying that Pythagoras "thought there was a mind spread through and pervading the whole nature of things whence our minds are plucked<sup>2</sup>." A similar doctrine of transmigration appears clearly in Pindar<sup>3</sup>, who was one of the first to give voice to the Orphic teaching, which his lays did much to diffuse. The addition that the Orphic poets made to the doctrine was doubtless the attribution to Dionysos and the Eleusinian goddess of the task of presiding over and arranging these rebirths.

Yet the austerities prescribed by the Orphic life, however fitted to a philosophic school, could hardly be practised by people engaged in the business of the world. It was impossible, as the Pythagoreans had probably found, for people to devote themselves entirely to the welfare of their souls, and yet to live among their fellows. Hence some other means by which man could be assured a happy lot after death had to be devised, and there seems

<sup>1</sup> That this was the regular Orphic phrase is plain from the verse quoted above, note 3 p. 127. Cf. the gold plates of Naples, p. 133, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Luebbert, *op. cit.* p. v. The confusion in Cicero between *animus* and *anima*, or mind and soul, is curious. Cf. Olympiodorus, *Comment. ad Plat. Phaed.* as given in Fr. 225 of Abel's *Orphica* (p. 245).

<sup>3</sup> Orpheus is mentioned in the ivth Pythian ode as the "father of songs," and in fragments of the *Threnoi* as "the golden-sworded son of Oiaereus," p. 116 (Bergk). In the vith Isthmian ode, Dionysos is made the temple-companion or assessor (*πάρεδρος*) of Demeter. The delights of the blessed dead are set forth in fragments of the *Threnoi* (see Fragment x. 1, 2, 3, 4 of Teubner, pp. 95, 96, Cod. Boeckh); their reincarnation as heroes in a fragment from the same poem: *ibid.* Frag. x. 4, p. 98, Cod. Bō.

no doubt that the post-Pythagorean Orphics taught that this was to be found in participation in the mysteries or secret rites already in existence in Greece before the commencement of their teaching. Whether the Eleusinian Mysteries were in their inception anything more than the worship of the Chthonian or infernal deities, as the gods presiding over agriculture and vegetation considered as a symbol of generation and death, is still undecided<sup>1</sup>; but there can be no doubt that under Orphic influence they underwent a complete change. Dionysos, identified with Hades or Zeus Chthonios, begins, after the break-up of the Pythagorean school, to take part in them by the side of Demeter and Persephone, and the story of his mysterious birth from the goddess, and his identification as Zagreus with Iacchos, the child-god leading the procession, seems from this period onwards to have been told in them<sup>2</sup>. But the mode in which the Mysteries were regarded by the Greeks in general materially altered after the introduction of the Orphic teaching, and this also can hardly be attributed to anything else than the direct influence of its professors. We are told on all sides that no religious teaching formed part of the Mysteries of Eleusis, and that on the contrary the initiates were simply shown certain scenes and objects, and heard certain mysterious words on which they were left to put their own

<sup>1</sup> The earlier idea espoused by Creuzer and others (see Guigniaut, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, vol. III. *passim*, and especially pp. 1207, 1208) that the Chthonian gods were worshipped as the symbols of generation and death seems a good deal nearer the truth than the "Corn-spirit" theory set on foot by the *Golden Bough* that they were the gods of agriculture and vegetation. Of course both explanations can be read into what we know of the Mysteries. Why these last should have been kept secret even before the rise of Orphism is hard to see. M. Paul Foucart's view that they came originally from a foreign country (according to him from Egypt) offers one explanation of this; but see n. 2 p. 139, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> So F. Lenormant in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Ant. s.v.* Eleusinia. See, too, his article on Dionysos Zagreus in the *Gazette Archéologique*, 1879. So Purser in Smith's *Dict. of Antiq.* as last quoted (cf. article "Eleusinia"). Aeschylus, *Sisyphus Drapetes*, frag. 242, p. 238, Didot, and Alemaeonis, in *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.h.v. both know of Zagreus, and Sophocles, *Antigone*, ll. 1140-1154 identifies Dionysos and Iacchos.

interpretation<sup>1</sup>. But the Orphics discovered in them a sacramental or purifying grace which was thought to have a kind of magical effect on the lot alike in this life and after death of those who took part in them. It was enough to have *seen* these mysteries, as the poets aver<sup>2</sup>, for man's place in the next world to be changed for the better, and thus it is the knowledge thus obtained, and not conduct or favour, which is thought to influence his destiny. The doctrine thus baldly stated moved to indignation Diogenes the Cynic, who pointed out that Patecion the brigand, who had been initiated, had earned for himself by this one act happiness after death, while Epaminondas, best of patriots, by the fact that he had not been initiated, was condemned to be plunged in mud and to undergo other tortures<sup>3</sup>.

The very important part in Orphic practice played by this belief in the magical power of initiation has lately been put beyond doubt by the discovery of certain inscriptions in the tombs of worshippers of the Orphic deities at places so far apart as Petelia in Magna Graccia, Calabria, Eleutherna in Crete, Naples, and Rome. On palaeographic grounds their dates are said to range over at least three centuries, the earliest having apparently been made in the ivth or iiird century B.C., and the latest in the ist or iind century of our era. They are all engraved on thin gold plates, are in Greek hexameter verse, and in the opinion of scholars are all taken from the same ritual, and therefore afford evidence of the permanence and fixity as well as of the wide spread of the Orphic teaching<sup>4</sup>. They contain instructions

<sup>1</sup> Synesius (Ptol. Episcop.), *Dion* (Migne, *Script. Gr.* t. 66, pp. 1153–1156), says so plainly. Cf. Galen, *de Usu Partium* (Kuhn's *Medici Graeci*, Claudius Galenus, vol. iv. pp. 702, 703), and Plutarch, *de Defect. Orac.* p. 422 (*Moralia*, vol. i. p. 514, Didot).

<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, *Triptolemus* (Frag. 348, Didot). Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, ll. 480 sqq. (p. 565, Didot). See also Chap. II, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *de audiend. Poet.* iv. 76 (Reisk); Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* c. vi.

<sup>4</sup> They have been many times described, especially by Kaibel and Comparetti (for references see Monceaux in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq. s.v. Orphica*). The translations in the text are by Prof. Gilbert

to the dead as to the things to be done and avoided by him or her in the next world and also the formulas to be repeated to the powers there met with, which will have the effect of magically procuring for the deceased an exalted rank among its inhabitants. One of the earliest in date, found at Petelia and now in the British Museum, runs thus :

“Thou shalt find to the left of the House of Hades a well-spring  
And by the side thereof standing a white cypress.  
To the well-spring approach not near ;  
But thou shalt find another by the Lake of Memory.  
Cold water flowing forth, and there are guardians before it.  
Say : I am a child of Earth and of Starry Heaven<sup>1</sup>  
But my race is of Heaven (above). This you know yourselves.  
And lo ! I am parched with thirst and I perish, Give me quickly  
The cold water flowing forth from the Lake of Memory<sup>2</sup>.  
And of themselves they will give me to drink from the Holy Well-  
Spring.”

Another set of plates from tombs at Eleutherna, now in the National Museum at Athens, is to this effect :

‘I am parched with thirst and I perish.—Nay, drink of Me  
The well-spring flowing for ever on the right where the cypress is  
Who art thou ?...  
Whence art thou ? I am the son of Earth and of Starry Heaven.”

The magical and gnostical purport of this is plain. As in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, to which these plates bear a great resemblance, their aim was to give the deceased person in whose tomb the inscription was buried<sup>3</sup>, the *knowledge* of the infernal or subterranean regions which was to make his entry into them safe and profitable. That his soul or immaterial

Murray and are taken from his Appendix to Miss Jane Harrison’s *Prolegomena to Study of Greek Religion*, 1903, q.v.

<sup>1</sup> The same phrase is used in the Orphic Hymn XIII. with regard to Kronos, Abel, *Orphica*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> This idea reappears in one of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia*. See Chap. X, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> So Aelius Aristides (*in Serapidem*, p. 98) speaks of the light of the sun being restored by Serapis “to those whose tombs contain holy books.”



part was a part of Dionysos, the descendant of Uranos and Gê<sup>1</sup>, and more directly the offspring of Demeter the earth-goddess by Zeus, the god of the sky, had already been shown to the dead on his initiation. But it was necessary that he should prove to the gods of death and generation that he *knew* this, when they would have no alternative but to admit him to all the privileges attached to his high descent and the rank he had attained in the scale of being by initiation. This is made plainer still by the statements put into the mouth of the dead by the gold plates from Naples, now in the Naples Museum, which read thus :

“ Out of the Pure I come, Pure Queen of those Below,  
And Eukles and Eubouleus<sup>2</sup> and other Gods and Demons ;  
For I also avow that I am of blessed race.  
And I have paid the penalty for deeds unrighteous  
Whether it is that Fate laid me low, or the Gods Immortal,  
Or [that Zeus has struck me ?] with star-flung thunderbolt  
I have flown out of the sorrowful weary Wheel ;  
I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired ;  
I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoena<sup>3</sup>, Queen of the Under-  
world  
I have passed with eager feet to [or from] the Circle desired ;  
And now I come a suppliant to Holy Persephone  
That of her grace she receive me to the seats of the Hallowed.”

Then comes Persephone's answer

“ Happy and Blessed One, Thou shalt be God instead of Mortal,”

<sup>1</sup> As Foucart, *Culte de Dionysos*, p. 34, n. 3, has pointed out, this cannot refer to the Titanic part of man, which he was enjoined by the Orphics to mortify as far as possible. There is something to be said for M. Foucart's view that the dead is here shown as another Osiris, son of the earth-god Geb and the sky-goddess Nut. It is curious that this last is always portrayed on Egyptian monuments with a star-spangled body, while I know of no Greek representation of Uranos which connects him with the stars.

<sup>2</sup> “ Of good counsel.” A name of Dionysos, as appears from the Orphic Hymns given later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> A name of Demeter, Persephone, and some other Chthonian goddesses. See Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae*, l. 286. It probably means merely “ mistress.”

while a prose formula "A kid I have fallen into milk" which seems to have been a password among the Orphics is written in the midst of the verses and appears upon this and several of the other plates<sup>1</sup>.

In the Naples plate, we have the teaching, more or less dimly indicated in the quotations from the Orphic poems which occur in classical and patristic writers, brought to a focus. The dead has during his earthly life taken part in the mystic rites which have told him whence life comes and whither it is tending. He now has the right to demand from the deities who preside over the death and rebirth of mortals that he be relieved from the endless round of incarnations; and he backs up this request by proof of the knowledge he possesses of their nature and his own origin, at the same time uttering passwords which he has received on his initiation. The effect of this, although out of reverence represented as an act of grace on the part of the divinities addressed, is in fact magical or automatic. The powers addressed perforce grant the request of the dead and he becomes like them a god<sup>2</sup>, freed from the necessity for any further deaths and rebirths. The same idea is traceable throughout the whole of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* from which it may have been directly derived<sup>3</sup>, and also in other

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that this is a figure for the initiated dead receiving all that they wish. It should be noted, however, that in the Zoroastrian religion the flood of molten metal which is to burn the wicked is to feel to the faithful like warm milk. So N. Söderblom, *La Vie Future d'après la Mazdéisme*, Paris, 1901, p. 266, quoting the *Dinkard* and the *Bundahish*. The phrase is discussed by M. Salomon Reinach in *Revue Archéol.* 1901, II. pp. 202-213, and *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, Paris, 1909, t. II. pp. 123-134. M. Alline, in *Xenia*, Athens, 1912, connects it with the supposed Orphic idea that blessed souls inhabit the Milky Way.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps not directly. There is some reason for thinking that the soul of the true Orphic was supposed to pass through the intermediate stages of hero and demon: see Hild, *Étude sur les Démons*, Paris, 1881, p. 144, where the subject is excellently treated. Cf. Pindar, *Threnoi*, Frag. x. 4, p. 98, Cod. B6. The deification of the dead was also a Pythagorean doctrine, as appears in the *Aurea Carmina*, ll. 70, 71, ed. Gaisford.

<sup>3</sup> This is the suggestion of Foucart, *Myst. d'Él.* p. 72. That the Egyptian dead was supposed to become one with Osiris himself is an idea that appears as early as the Pyramid Texts, cf. Maspero, *Les Pyramides de*

religions with which it would seem the Orphic teaching can have had no connection<sup>1</sup>. But the point to remember at present is that it appears henceforward in all the cults or sects to which we have given the generic name of Gnostic<sup>2</sup>.

How this idea was propagated in Greece and her colonies is a question over which still hangs a great deal of obscurity. There exist a great number of quotations from poems attributed to Orpheus, which were clearly the composition of the Orphic school, and all these are, like the gold plates, in hexameter verse. These, as Damascius implies, were recited by professional declaimers called Rhapsodists<sup>3</sup> at the different games and festivals held in honour of the gods, as were once the so-called Homeric Hymns and the poems of Pindar, which they perhaps succeeded and displaced. In this way they doubtless became familiar to many thousands who would otherwise never have heard of the Orphic teaching, and our conviction on this point is strengthened when we see how very numerous the festivals in which the Chthonian gods were celebrated really were. Besides Eleusis, we hear of the worship of Dionysos, Demeter and Persephone as infernal deities in Achaea, in the Argolid, in Arcadia, in Messenia, in Sparta, and in other parts of the Peloponnesus<sup>4</sup>. It also spread through Boeotia, where the national cult of Dionysos no doubt ensured it a good reception, and thence early passed into the islands of the Aegean. Crete had, as we have seen, practised it even before it came to Athens; and Demeter and Persephone were not only worshipped in Sicily, but were taken to be the tutelary gods of the island. The Ionian colonists also took the worship of the Eleusinian triad with them into Asia and they were adored in parts of

*Saggarah, passim*, where the dead kings are each in turn hailed as "this Osiris."

<sup>1</sup> Buddhism, for instance, which can hardly have reached the West before the death of Onomacritus.

<sup>2</sup> As in the *Pistis Sophia*, where Jesus says to his disciples, "Know ye not that ye are all gods. . .", p. 247 (Copt.).

<sup>3</sup> For Damascius, *Quaest. de primis principiis*, see Abel's *Orphica*, Frag. 48. Cf. as to Rhapsodists, Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, I. pp. 240, 345, 346.

<sup>4</sup> See Maury, *op. cit.* II. pp. 370 *sqq.*

Asia Minor as far distant from Greece as Cyzicus<sup>1</sup>. At all, or nearly all, these places, mysteries were celebrated, having more or less likeness to those of Eleusis, and were followed by games and festivals like the Eleusinia, at which the songs of the Rhapsodists would be heard<sup>2</sup>. The frequent Dionysia, or festivals of Dionysos, scattered all over the Greek-speaking world, but especially in its Northern or Balkan provinces, no doubt offered an even better opportunity for making known these poems.

The Orphic poets, also, by no means confined their songs to the worship of the deities adored at Eleusis. The Thracians, including in that name the inhabitants of Macedonia and Thessaly, always had extraordinary ideas about the future life, and Herodotus describes how they used to gather weeping round the new-born child, bewailing his entry into this miserable world, while they rejoiced over the death of any of their fellows, declaring that he had thus obtained a happy deliverance from his troubles<sup>3</sup>. These, however, were the very doctrines of the Orphics, who declared that the body was the grave of the soul, and that the life of the world to come was the only one worth living. Hence the mythical Orpheus was said to have been a Thracian, and the worship of Bacchus or the Theban Dionysos as the god of wine to have come into Attica from Thrace by way of Boeotia, a theory which derives some colour from the orgiastic dances and ravings of the Maenads and Bacchanals, who seem therein to have reproduced the rites of the savage Thracians<sup>4</sup>. When the Phrygian divinities—Cybele the Mother of the Gods, and her consort Attis—were brought into Greece, the Orphics seized hold of their legends also, and so transformed them that it is now impossible for us to tell how much of them is Asiatic,

<sup>1</sup> Maury, *op. cit.* II. p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> Such as the Mysteries of Samothrace, held in honour, according to one account, of Pluto, Demeter, and Persephone, together with Hermes. See Maury, *op. cit.* II. pp. 306 *sqq.* for authorities. It was at these mysteries that Philip of Macedon was said to have first seen and loved Olympias (Plutarch, *Alexander*, c. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, Bk v. c. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, II. p. 203, for authorities.

and how much is the result of Orphic interpolation<sup>1</sup>. The same thing may be said of the worship of the Syrian Adonis, whose mystic death turned him into the spouse of Persephone, and enabled the Orphics to identify him with Eubuleus or the infernal Zeus or Dionysos, and of that of the Thracian moon-goddess Bendis, early worshipped in Athens, whom an Orphic verse preserved by Proclus declares to be Persephone herself<sup>2</sup>.

The foreign god, however, in whose worship the Orphic doctrine is most plainly visible was Sabazius, who also seems originally to have come from Phrygia. He is described in an early Greek inscription as "Lord of all<sup>3</sup>" and said later to be the son of Cybele. The Greeks, however, quickly identified him with Dionysos Zagreus<sup>4</sup>, and an orgiastic worship of him penetrated into Athens some time before Alexander's conquests. This seems to have been well known to Aristophanes, who declaims in the *Lysistrata* against the "wantonness" of the Athenian women, who gave themselves up to the pursuit of this god and the Syrian Adonis<sup>5</sup>. But the associations formed for the worship of these divinities seem to have been recruited almost entirely from among the courtezans of the Piraeus and the trades dependent on them, and more than one of its priestesses were put to death for "impiety" or interference with the religion of the State. The low estimation in which it was generally held may be judged from the invective of Demosthenes against

<sup>1</sup> As in the Orphic Hymn to Mise given on p. 143, *infra*, where the Eleusinian Dionysos, called also Eubuleus and Iacchos, is identified with Cybele, the Cyprian Aphrodite, and the Egyptian Isis. See, too, the Hymn "of the Great Mysteries" given in the *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus, where Dionysos is equated with Adonis, Osiris, the god of Samothrace, Attis, and others. See n. 1 p. 139, and Chap. VIII, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See last note; Proclus, in *Plat. Polit.* p. 353 (Abel's *Orphica*, Frag. 184).

<sup>3</sup> πανκαίπατος. *C.I.G.* t. II. No. 3791 (Bö.). Cf. the Aeschylean description of Zagreus as the "Highest of All" (παννέπτατε πάντων) quoted by Gaisford in his notes to *Etymologicum Magnum* (see *Cycli Fragmenta* of Didot, s.v. Epigoni vel Alcmaeonis).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the Σαβάκιε . . . ὡς Βάκχον Διόνυσον of Hymn XLVIII. Abel's *Orphica*.

<sup>5</sup> *Lysistrata*, II. 386-390. Cf. Foucart, *Les Ass. Rel.* pp. 61-64, who quotes nearly all the available authorities in his notes. See also Monceaux in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq.* s.v. Sabazios.

his rival Aeschines, whose mother Glaucotea was a priestess of Sabazius, and who had himself in his youth assisted her in her duties<sup>1</sup>:

“ When you became a man, you knew by heart the books of your mother and helped her to make up others; and you nightly gave the initiated the *nebride* (fawn-skin) and baptized them and purified them, wiping off the clay and bran, and raising them after the purifications, teaching them to say ‘ I have shunned evil. I have found good.’...By day you led fine *thiasi* (confraternities) through the streets crowned with leaves of fennel and poplar, you heading the procession and squeezing the broad-jawed serpents, waving them above your head while you shouted *Evoe Saboï* and danced *Hyes Attis*, *Attis Hyes*; and the old women hailed you as leader of the dance, and chief, and chest-bearer, and sieve-bearer, and with such like titles; while you received from them as your pay sops and twisted loaves and cakes. Who would not think himself lucky with such a life!”

The whole of this tirade may be explained by reference to the Orphic teaching about Dionysos Zagreus. The fawn-skin or *nebride* was worn, as appears on thousands of vases, in the Dionysiac rites as in those relating to the burial of Osiris. The clay and bran are thought to refer to the disguise which the Titans assumed when stealing upon the infant god, and the speech about shunning evil apparently denotes the putting away of the Titanic nature and the resolution in future to cultivate the Dionysiac soul. The serpents are explained by a custom peculiar to the Sabazian rites of putting a live serpent into the bosom of the initiate's garment and taking it out at the foot in memory of the shape in which Zeus begot Dionysos on his daughter Persephone. The mystic cry of “*Evoe*” is a well known feature of the orgiastic worship of Dionysos; while “*Saboï*” seems to cover some name or epithet of Sabazius<sup>2</sup>, and the phrase “*Hyes Attis*” shows the connection with Attis,

<sup>1</sup> Demosthenes, *de Corona*, pp. 259 *sqq.* Cf. Foucart, *Les Ass. Rel.* p. 67, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> In the Orphic Hymn to Hippa (Hymn XLIX. Abel's *Orphica*, p. 84), the mysteries of the “pure Sabos?” (*ἀγνοῦ Σάβου*) are alluded to in terms which make it possible that the name was one of the epithets of the Iacchos of Eleusis.

whose identity with Dionysos forms the subject of more than one Orphic Hymn<sup>1</sup>. In all this also it may be noticed that there is no pretence of considering conduct as influencing the destiny of the initiate or even of conciliating the divinity invoked. The whole of the rites described are entirely magical, and owe all their efficacy to the knowledge of the right means to be used to compel the spiritual world to perform the votaries' will. It is obvious that people with such ideas will be in no great hurry to extend the advantage of their discoveries to others less lucky than themselves and will on the contrary do much to keep them a secret confined to a few<sup>2</sup>.

Did the Orphics, however, at any time form themselves into a church or brotherhood pledged to mutual support and the propagation of the faith? Some writers of authority have thought so<sup>3</sup>; but there seems to be no evidence available to

<sup>1</sup> In a hymn preserved for us by Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 1, p. 176, Cruice) the "multiform Attis," who has just been declared "in a hymn of the Great Mysteries" to be the god who is called Adonis, Osiris, Adam (by the Samothracians), Corybas and Pappas, is thus addressed: "I will sing Attis, son of Rhea, not with the sound of trumpets, nor with the Idaean flutes in harmony with the songs of the Curetes. But I will mingle with my lay Phoebus' music of lutes. *Evoe Evan*, since thou art Pan, since thou art Bacchus, since thou art the shepherd of white stars." In the address to Musaeus with which the collection of Orphic Hymns begins, the Mother of the Gods, Attis, Men, Aphrodite Urania, and Adonis are invoked together. See Abel's *Orphica*, p. 58. In Roman times Attis and Sabazius seem to be identified, while Adonis is often confounded with them. See Maury, *Rel. de la Grèce*, III. p. 102 and n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> This is, perhaps, the only satisfactory reason that can be assigned for the secrecy with which the Mysteries of Eleusis, of the Great Mother, and the rest were surrounded. The notion put forward by the Fathers that the mystic rites were kept secret because of their obscenity has little weight when we consider the Phallophoria and the Terms, or street statues of Hermes, which were publicly exhibited. The existence of secret rites among primitive folk like the black races of Africa and the native Australians can be explained in the same way.

<sup>3</sup> Purser, *ubi cit. supra*, speaks of it as "an ascetic religious brotherhood," as did K. O. Müller, *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology* (Eng. ed.), p. 318, and *Litt. of Ant. Greece*, I. p. 307. Döllinger, *Jud. und Heid.* I. p. 161, says truly that there is no evidence that at any time there existed a regularly formed association of Orphici in Greece. So Monceaux in Daremberg and Saglio, *s.v.* Orpheus.

warrant the supposition. Although the worshippers of Cybele, Attis, Adonis, Dionysos, the Eleusinian deities, and Sabazius, were by no means averse from announcing the nature of their faith on their tombstones, we nowhere find any funeral inscriptions declaring the dead to have belonged to any body of worshippers calling themselves Orphici. A more likely theory is that the Orphics were banded together in the small independent associations known as *Thiasi*, *Erani*, or *Orgeones*<sup>1</sup>, like those which we have seen founded at Athens and elsewhere for the worship of foreign gods. It would seem probable enough; but as yet all documentary evidence is entirely lacking. Records, generally in the shape of stelas or tablets containing the lists of members and the regulations of the associations, have been found in some numbers for the *thiasi* of nearly all the gods honoured by the Orphic poets who were not the gods of the Greek States; but among them no association calling itself Orphic has yet been discovered. What we do know is, that in the days of Plato, there was a class of strolling charlatans called Orpheotelestae who were accustomed to haunt the doors of the rich with a heap of books said to have been written by Orpheus, out of which they offered, in exchange for money, to perform ceremonies of purification and initiation which they affirmed would purge from the recipient all trace of personal or inherited guilt and assure him a happy lot in the next world<sup>2</sup>. They also told fortunes, offered to dispose of enemies, and sometimes gathered together in some numbers so as to make a more vivid and imposing representation of the pains of the uninitiated in Hades, and thus induce the superstitious to pay the price of their charms<sup>3</sup>. They had a certain amount of success, and Theophrastus in his *Characters* exhibits his *Deisidæmon* or Superstitious Man as going to them with his wife and family to be purified once a month<sup>4</sup>. Such vagabonds could hardly have made a living had there been any organized

<sup>1</sup> This was the opinion of Guigniaut, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1825, t. III. p. 1203.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Republic*, Bk II. c. 7, is the classical passage. Cf. Döllinger, *op. cit.* I. pp. 165–167, and references there given.

<sup>3</sup> See Döllinger as in last note.

<sup>4</sup> Theophrastus, *Characteres*, c. XVI.



body ready to render like services in a regular way, and the fact of their existence and the contempt with which they are spoken of by the writers of the period go some way to show that no more regular Orphic brotherhood or sect was ever known in Greece.

There have nevertheless come down to us upwards of eighty hymns attributed to Orpheus which all bear a certain likeness to each other and were evidently intended by the compiler for use in some religious or magical ceremony<sup>1</sup>. They are, like all the fragments of Orphic poems that we have, in hexameter verse, and most of them conclude with an invocation to the divinity to whom they are addressed to be present or to aid in the accomplishment of some "work," while this invocation often alludes to "mysteries" and "initiates." More than one text of these hymns exist, and the differences between them are so small that it is plain that their contents must for a long time have been known and settled. Much variety of opinion exists among the learned as to their date, the theory of their first modern commentator being that they were the actual hymns used in the Eleusinian Mysteries<sup>2</sup>, while Petersen thought that they were composed in the 1st or 11th century of our era, although he admitted that some eight or nine of them were probably older<sup>3</sup>. One of the latest and best opinions seems to be that of Prof. Albrecht Dieterich, who thinks that the collection dates from the period between 200 B.C. and the birth of Christ, and that it was probably made on the sea-coast of Asia Minor and that of Egypt near Alexandria<sup>4</sup>. That the hymns were brought

<sup>1</sup> There are 88 in the text published by Abel (*Orphica*, pp. 55-102). This includes the Hymn to Ares generally classed among the Homeric Hymns.

<sup>2</sup> The celebrated Thomas Taylor the Platonist. Pausanias, Bk ix. cc. 27 and 30, says that the Hymns of Orpheus were short and few, and that the Lycomidae knew and sung them in the Mysteries.

<sup>3</sup> Abel, *Orphica*, p. 55, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dieterich, *de Hymnis Orphicis*, Marp. Catt. 1891. Otto Kern in the *Festschrift* presented to Prof. C. R. B. Weidmann, 1910, points out that there is no trace of the worship of the Emperor in the Hymns, and that these must therefore all be anterior to the Christian era; also that the Egyptian deities are so seldom named in them, that the collection cannot have been made in Egypt. He thinks it comes from Asia Minor.

together for some religious or magical use associated with the Orphic teaching, is evident from the Preface, which purports to be an address to Musaeus, the legendary son of Orpheus, although it is really an invocation to all the gods worshipped by the Orphics, including several who are not specially addressed in the hymns which follow. Of the 87 or 88 hymns common to most of the codices, all but nine bear after their titles a specification of the particular perfume—frankincense, myrrh, spices and the like—to be burnt while they are sung or recited. Most of the texts bear also an endorsement in another hand reading “Comrade! use [it] with good fortune!” and this has induced Prof. Dieterich and others to conclude that the collection was made for the liturgic use of some confraternity or *thiasus* professing Orphic doctrines<sup>1</sup>. The following Hymn to Persephone will perhaps give a fair notion of the lines upon which these hymns are framed:

#### HYMN TO PERSEPHONE<sup>2</sup>.

“Persephone, daughter of great Zeus, come, thou beloved one,  
Only-begotten<sup>3</sup> goddess, accept the offerings well pleasing to thee.  
Much-honoured consort of Pluto, dear giver of life,  
Praxidice, decked with love-locks, chaste offspring of Deo.  
Giver of birth to the Eumenides, queen of those below the earth,  
Virgin whom Zeus begot in unspeakable nuptials<sup>4</sup>  
Mother of the loud-shouting, many-formed Eubuleus<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The collection may have been used as an oracle or divining-book like any other poems written in hexameters. See a curious instance of this in Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in British Museum*, pp. 83 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> This is numbered xxix. in Abel's text. This, and the hymns of Hecate, Pluto, the Curetes, Dionysos Bassareus, the Ever-living Deliverer (Bacchus), Aphrodite, Nemesis, Nomos, and the doubtful one to Ares are the only hymns out of the original collection which have not the note appended as to the perfume to be burnt.

<sup>3</sup> Μονογένεια, “Unique,” see n. 3 p. 124, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> So Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* c. II. speaks of “the mysteries of Demeter, and Zeus' wanton embraces of his mother and the wrath of Demeter... also the entreaties of Zeus, and the drink of gall, the plucking-out of the hearts of sacrifices and deeds we dare not name.” Arnobius, *adv. Gentes*, Bk v. cc. 20, 21, tells substantially the same story.

<sup>5</sup> See n. 2 p. 133, *supra*. In these hymns it is used always as an epithet either of Bacchus or Hades with whom the mystic Bacchus was identified.

Playfellow of the Hours, light-bringer of glorious form,  
 Dread ruler of all, virgin teeming with fruit  
 Brilliant-rayed, horned-one, the sole desire of mortals.  
 Vernal one, who rejoicest in the breath of the meadows  
 Who dost bring to light the sacred shape of green fruit buds.  
 Who in autumn time wast wedded in a ravished bed :  
 Who art alone the life and death of much-enduring mortals.  
 Persephone ! For thou dost ever nourish and slay all things.  
 Hear, blessed goddess, and send up fruits from the earth  
 Granting us in abundance peace and gentle-handed health  
 And a life of happiness, such as leads old age untroubled  
 To thy realm, O queen, and to dread Pluto."

By the side of this we may perhaps put the Hymn to Dionysos in the same collection. It is probably later than the other in date, the syncretism which equates Persephone with Aphrodite, Cybele, and Isis pointing to a post-Alexandrian origin.

[HYMN] OF MISE—PERFUME : STORAX<sup>1</sup>.

"I invoke the law-giving, rod-bearing, Dionysos  
 The never-to-be-forgotten seed, Eubuleus of many names  
 Who art<sup>2</sup> sacred and sacrosanct Mise, ineffable queen !  
 Male and female, of double nature, the redeemer [*or* curse-loosing]<sup>3</sup>  
 Iacchos  
 Whether thou art delighting in the sweet-smelling temple of Eleusis  
 Or art solemnizing mysteries with the Mother in Phrygia,  
 Or art rejoicing in Cyprus with the fair-crowned Cytherea,  
 Or dost exult in the pure wheat-bearing plains  
 With thy mother divine, black-robed, august Isis  
 And thy busy nurses<sup>4</sup> near the Egyptian stream,  
 Be gracious and come thou benevolent to accomplish our tasks."

<sup>1</sup> No. XLII. in Abel's *Orphica*. Persephone was called Mise Kore at Pergamum (C. Radet, *Revue des Études anciennes*, January-March, 1911, p. 77), which shows how closely she had become identified with her consort. Otherwise the word is only known, I believe, as a name of Dionysos.

<sup>2</sup> τε . . . τε.

<sup>3</sup> Λύσειος.

<sup>4</sup> Doubtless the bees, who throughout Asia Minor were said to be the attendants of the Great Goddess. The priestesses of the Ephesian Artemis were called Μέλισσαι or Bees, and there were Μέλισσαι at Eleusis. See Foucart, *Grds. Myst.* pp. 66, 67. Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, l. 1274. So were those of Cybele : cf. Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* Bk I. c. 22. Cf. also, A. B. Cook, "The Bee in Greek Mythology" in *J.H.S.* xv. (1895), pp. 17 sqq.

Whatever date be assigned to these hymns, it is at least admitted by all commentators that they were composed for the use of persons professing Orphic doctrines, and we shall be on safe grounds if we assume that they represent the later state of the Orphic teaching. Collating them with the fragments of Orphic verses preserved in the quotations of writers during the late Pagan and early Christian centuries, we are able to reconstitute the whole Orphic creed, as it was known shortly before the triumph of Christianity. We see from this that the Orphics attributed the actual beginning of the universe to their god Dionysos, who first appeared from the egg formed from Night or Chaos. In that manifestation, he was bisexual<sup>1</sup>, and thus mother, as well as father, of all the gods and goddesses of the popular pantheon, the swallowing of his heart by Zeus making him one with the Homeric "father of gods and men." His second birth was due to the ineffable, or mystic, union of Zeus and Demeter, and he was in infancy torn in pieces and eaten by the Titans as narrated above. From the ashes of these last, men were born, while Dionysos himself became Hades, the King of the Dead, over whom he rules with his consort Persephone, the daughter, as Dionysos is the son, of Zeus and Demeter, and perhaps known to the initiate as only the female form of her consort<sup>2</sup>. This pair preside over the life and death of mortals, the soul or Dionysiac spark within each man or woman having to pass repeatedly through the bodies of other human beings and animals until finally purified, when it will be united with Dionysos and thus become god<sup>3</sup>. But the process can be made easier and shorter by the saving grace of the Mysteries, which by the knowledge they confer on the initiate of the constitution and ramification of

<sup>1</sup> διφυῆς. See Orphic Hymn vi. in Abel's *Orphica*.

<sup>2</sup> As in the Orphic Hymn to Mise quoted above. Cf. Dyer, *op. cit.* pp. 178, 179.

<sup>3</sup> That this may have been thought to be the result of the mystic union of the initiate with Dionysos seems possible from the statement of Plutarch, that this last was born as a man, but by his merit was translated from this earthly and suffering body, *Life of Pelopidas*, c. xvi. Cf. Budge, *Pseudo-Callisthenes' Life of Alexander the Great*, p. 135.

the divine nature, of the geography, so to speak, of the next world, and of the magical words and formulas to be there repeated, give him a vast advantage over his less favoured fellows<sup>1</sup>. The third incarnation of Dionysos, god of wine, begotten by the father of gods and men on Semele, daughter of Cadmus, after the heart of the infant Zagreus had been sewn in his thigh, must be looked upon as a concession to the popular belief in a different mythology. To those initiated, whether in the Eleusinian or in other mysteries, the last incarnation of Dionysos was that brought about by the union of Zeus in serpent shape<sup>2</sup> with Persephone, and he must have been the child whose mystic birth was acted in the Mysteries of Eleusis where he was identified with Iacchos, the leader of the procession.

The effect of this creed, the real symbol of the greatest movement which ever took place within the religion of the pre-Christian Greeks, upon the religions that followed its appearance, remains to be considered. In the first place, Orphism went a great way towards weaning the minds of men from the idea of separate gods for different nations, and towards teaching them that all their national and local deities were but different forms of one great Power, who was himself the source of all being. There can be little doubt that the Orphics thus regarded their god Dionysos, whom they made one with his father Zeus, and hailed as being in himself female as well as male, and the common type of all goddesses as well as of all gods. By their readiness to identify him alike with the chthonian god of Eleusis, and with all the foreign gods—Adonis, Attis, Sabazius, and Osiris—with whom they were brought in contact, they showed how far they were willing to go in the path of syncretism ; and, but for the rise of Christianity and other religions, there can be little doubt but that the whole of the Graeco-Roman deities

<sup>1</sup> A sort of echo of this is perhaps to be found in the idea prevalent in the primitive Church that martyrs for the faith passed direct to a state of blessedness without waiting like the rest of the faithful for the Last Judgment. Cf. Revelation vi. 9–11 ; Neander, *Ch. Hist.* i. p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> Zeus Chthonios or the Zeus below the earth. The serpent was always to the Orphic poets a symbol or pictorial representation of earth.

would eventually have merged in Dionysos<sup>1</sup>. Yet although in this, as well as in their sanguine idea of the perfectibility of man's nature, the Orphics may seem to have done somewhat towards elevating and purifying religion, it seems plain that their influence was on the whole hostile to it, and had they ever aimed at and attained supreme power, would have ended in the negation of all religion whatever. Whether the Orphics originally demanded from their followers any moral as well as material purification cannot now be said; but the proceedings of the Orpheotelestae show us how very early in their teaching all such ideas were dropped, and the magical theory of the efficacy of the Mysteries as a means of salvation came to outweigh everything else in the eyes of their votaries. The compulsion of the gods, however, is an idea that, once rooted in the mind of man, is sure to bring forth most unwholesome fruit; and Orphism seems to have brought with it from the beginning all the worst practices of magic. The Orpheotelestae did not scruple, as has been said, to undertake to rid their initiates of an inconvenient adversary<sup>2</sup>; and although this may not at the outset have implied anything worse than idle curses, it was at any rate murder in intention, and in Greece, as everywhere else, early led to the calling-in of the aid of poison. Magical rites, too, generally bring with them a more or less pronounced worship of devils or evil beings as such, and there are many signs that the Orphics by no means confined their invocations to powers supposed to be friendly to man. Among the Orphic Hymns may be found an invocation to the Titans, who were the legendary enemies of Zeus Dionysos and all the celestial gods, and it is probable that this instance is not a solitary one<sup>3</sup>. The worship of gods given up to evil generally results in the depravation of the morals of their votaries, and the purposes for which they are invoked are seldom sublime. Most of this

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the upshot of the remarks in Pseudo-Callisthenes (Budge, *op. cit. supra*), pp. 8, 12, 40-48, 127, 135. The same idea is specially marked in the writings of Proclus and other Neo-Platonists and by them attributed to Orpheus. Cf. Abel's *Orphica*, s.v. Teletai, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Republ.* Bk II. c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> No. xxxvii. in Abel's *Orphica*, p. 78.

evil sorcery seems to have centred round the cult of Hecate, herself a mystery goddess revered at Eleusis and especially dear to the Orphics<sup>1</sup>. Down to the very end of paganism, and indeed, onward through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Hecate remained the mistress of magicians and the patron saint of sorcerers<sup>2</sup>.

One other consequence of the Orphic teaching deserves to be noted. The syncretistic tendency, which led the true Orphic to regard Zeus, Apollo, Hades, and all the gods and goddesses of the popular pantheon as so many varying forms of his own Dionysos, must have always rendered him indifferent as to what deity received his public devotions. Secure in the sacramental grace bestowed upon him by the mere participation in the Mysteries, and fortified by the knowledge of the formulas which were by themselves sufficient to ensure him a happy lot in the next world, it is plain that he must always have held himself at liberty to adore any god or goddess worshipped by those among whom he found himself, and that he must have been ready to conform outwardly to any religion which seemed to offer him any personal advantage. Knowledge, not faith, was to him the one thing needful to the soul, and he would be as little likely to think of enduring persecution for opinion's sake as to approve of inflicting it. The secret rites and the secret formulas comprised the whole of his religion.

To sum up, then, the practical result of their speculations, the Orphics taught that the universe had passed through several stages of evolution since it was formed from chaos by its First God or Divine Workman. Each of these stages was described as the reign of a fresh ruler or supreme divinity, who was the "son" of the foregoing or, as it would seem, a new incarnation of him. Man came into being through the mystic death and dispersion throughout the universe of one of the last of these incarnations, and therefore contains within himself a spark

<sup>1</sup> See Maury, *La Magie et L'Astrologie dans l'Antiquité et en Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1860, pp. 54, 55, for authorities. The Orphic Hymns above quoted begin with an invocation to Hecate.

<sup>2</sup> As in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

of the Divine nature which is capable of purification from the contamination of soulless matter. This is effected in the ordinary way by a succession of deaths and rebirths in the course of which man's soul would pass into that of other animals and human beings. But the process was thought to be shortened by participation in certain mysteries or secret rites handed down by tradition, wherein the hidden constitution and purpose of Nature were disclosed to the initiate, and he was equipped with mysterious names and formulas thought to possess magical power. These, by their mere utterance, gave him the right to demand his release from the painful circle of rebirths which was the common lot of mankind, and in effect turned him into a being superior to man. The possession of this wonder-working knowledge or gnosis was not however granted indiscriminately to all, but remained a secret confined to a favoured few, who were pledged under sufficiently severe sanctions not to disclose it. That all religions professed by mankind were equal and indifferent in the eyes of the Orphic seems to follow logically from this, as does the position that he might himself profess any of them that seemed to him expedient. We shall find all these features present in the many sects of post-Christian Gnostics.



## CHAPTER V

### PRE-CHRISTIAN Gnostics : THE ESSENES

It comes as rather a wrench to leave the graceful, if vain, speculations of the Greeks, with their joyous and free life and their passionate worship of beauty, which saw in every shifting aspect of nature the revelation of some Being more perfect and glorious than man, for the gloomy and misanthropic monotheism of the Palestinian Jews. Nor is the change made more pleasant when we consider the contrast between the ideas of the two nations as to the perfectibility of man's nature and his lot after death. While the Greeks under Orphic influence had come to look upon their gods as usually well-disposed to mankind<sup>1</sup> and even willing to share their power and place with, at any rate, a few highly-gifted or fortunate men, the fanatics among the Jews who returned from the Babylonian Captivity seem to have seen in their national Deity a jealous and uncompromising tyrant, possessed with a hatred for humanity in general, and only extending a modified favouritism to one small nation not distinguished by any specially attractive qualities<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> So Euripides makes Iphigenia (*I. in Taur.* l. 400) say, "I think not that any one of the gods is bad." Cf. J. A. Hild, *Ét. sur les Démones*, pp. 53, 136. In sharp contrast to the Jewish idea exemplified in Deuteronomy of a god whose "name is Jealous" is Plato's description of the Creator in the *Timæus* (40 c.), "He is not jealous, for he is good, and in him that is good no jealousy exists."

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that what is said here of the Jews applies not to the Hebrew race in general, but only to those members of it who settled in Palestine after the return from the Captivity. Winwood Reade puts the matter with no less truth than point when he says (*Martyrdom of Man*, p. 203): "The people who did return were chiefly the fanatics, the clergy, and the paupers. The harvest... was worthy of the seed."

To this nation, Yahweh had, according to their own traditions, promised exclusive temporal advantages ; but in spite of this promise they had become in turn the slaves or tributaries of the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Assyrians, Chaldaeans, and Persians, and had been more than once forcibly removed by their masters from the land that they looked upon as their God-given inheritance. Moreover, the grace, such as it was, of the Deity they worshipped was held by them to extend to this life only, after which they thought they would either perish like the beasts or would lead at the best a shadowy and colourless existence in Sheol or Hades, like that which called forth the complaints of the Achilles of the *Odyssey*<sup>1</sup>. Hence the soil of Judaea at the coming of Alexander might have seemed to anyone to be as unlikely a field for the propagation of ideas resembling those of the Orphics as could well be imagined. But the Jews, with all their pragmatism and narrowness of ideal, have always shown a power of assimilating the ideas of others and of adapting themselves to the usages of the peoples among whom they are cast by a sort of protective mimicry like that to which the preservation of certain insect types is said to be due. This quality had already stood them in good stead during their different periods of captivity in Egypt and Chaldaea, where before Alexander's conquests they had contrived to get a good deal of the financial management of their captors' affairs into their own hands, and where they doubtless acted as spies and guides to the armies of the Great Conqueror<sup>2</sup>. For these services Alexander after his fashion royally rewarded them ; but the real crisis of the nation's fate approached when Alexander's work was done, and when the different nationalities which he had forced, as it were, into the melting-pot, became tired of acting as pieces in the war game played by his generals and successors, and began to look favourably upon the security offered by the Roman government. In this new order of the world, Palestine, which had hitherto owed its autonomous

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (Jowett Lectures), 1899, pp. 33-50, and authorities there quoted.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Mahaffy, *Empire of the Ptolemies*, pp. 85, 86.

existence to the fact that it formed a useful buffer state or neutral ground separating the two great powers Egypt and Syria and was not vehemently desired by any other nation, saw the reason for her *quasi*-independence vanishing. Ptolemy Soter, with his usual prescience, had early seen the advantage of getting this borderland into his own custody, and had captured Jerusalem, it is said, one Sabbath morning, when the superstition of the inhabitants deterred them from defending it effectually<sup>1</sup>. The story, as thus told, probably owes something to the necessity for flattering the national vanity; but it is evident that the politic Lagides knew how to reconcile the Jews to the easy yoke of their suzerainty, and under the early Ptolemies the Jews remained generally faithful to Egypt. When Egypt's sway became enfeebled after the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator, Antiochus the Great seized upon Palestine, probably with the connivance of a part of its inhabitants<sup>2</sup>; and although it remained fairly contented with its new masters until Antiochus' death, in the reign of his successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews found themselves confronted with a very disagreeable dilemma. For Antiochus Epiphanes, after his successful attack upon Egypt had been frustrated by the Romans, saw plainly enough that only an empire united and homogeneous in faith and culture could resist for long the new power rising in the West<sup>3</sup>, and resolved to force on the complete Hellenization of the Jews at all hazards. How he failed is told in the Books of the Maccabees, although his failure brought little good to his rebellious subjects, who soon passed with the rest of his empire into the hands of the victorious Romans.

To this end, the splitting-up of the chosen people into warring sects materially contributed. Josephus, writing somewhere about the year 70 A.D., tells us that there existed in his day three "philosophic" sects among the Jews<sup>4</sup>. The first two of these were the Pharisees and Sadducees familiar to everybody

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *Hellénisme*, II. p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Mahaffy, *op. cit.* p. 87 and n. 1; *ibid.* p. 293 and nn. 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> W. D. Morrison, *Jews under Roman Rule*, pp. 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Jos. *de Bell.* Bk II. c. 8, *passim*.

through their mention in the New Testament, and the third was the "Essenes." These Essenes—a name which by some has been thought to mean "the Pure"<sup>1</sup>—he describes as a small sect numbering not more than 4000 in all, and scattered throughout the villages of Palestine. They lived entirely by manual labour, such as agriculture, and were extraordinarily hospitable to other members of the same sect, so that an Essene never found it necessary to take anything with him on a journey, but could always obtain what he wanted from his fellow-sectaries, even though personally unknown to them. As to their doctrines, he tells us that though "Jews by birth" they abjured marriage<sup>2</sup>, and only recruited their ranks by adoption. They practised, on the same authority, the fullest community of goods, and forbade conversation on worldly matters before the rising of the sun, at which they repeated certain traditional prayers, "as if they made supplication for his rising." Their meals were always eaten in common and in a sacramental manner, purification in cold water and the donning of white garments being a necessary preliminary<sup>3</sup>. Sobriety and restraint in speech were, he says, among their most marked characteristics, and they avoided the taking of judicial oaths, averring that "he who cannot be believed without swearing by God is already condemned." Initiation into the sect was both long and difficult. The novice on his first reception was presented with a hatchet, a girdle and a white garment, but was not allowed to associate with the rest of the order, it being held that they would be defiled if he did so. In spite of this, he was forced to observe the austerities of the order for a year before being allowed "the waters of purification," and for two years further before being admitted to full

<sup>1</sup> Or "the Pious." See Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 327; A. Jülicher in *Encyc. Bibl. s.v. Essenes*, col. 1397, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> There was, says Josephus, *loc. cit.* § 13, another order of Essenes which married and had children. The reason given for the celibacy of the first order is not the Orphic one, *ibid.* § 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the *Agapae* or love-feasts of the Greek *thiasi* and the Christian Church. There is no authority, however, for supposing that the meal was regarded by the Essenes as a sacrifice.

association with the other members and the common meal<sup>1</sup>. After this probation, he was sworn on

“ the most tremendous oaths to be just towards all men and faithful to the order, not discovering any of their doctrines to others, no, not though he should be compelled to do so at the risk of his life.”

Moreover, he had to swear

“ to communicate their doctrines to no one in any other manner than that in which he had received them himself ; to abstain from robbery<sup>2</sup> and that he would equally preserve the books belonging to the sect and the names of the angels.”

Their doctrine concerning the future life was :

“ That bodies are corruptible and that the matter of which they are made is not permanent ; but that souls are immortal, and continue for ever ; and that they come out of the most subtle air, and are united to their bodies as in prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement<sup>3</sup> ; but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward<sup>4</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> The girdle has been thought to be identical with the *kosti* or sacred thread of the Parsis. The use of the hatchet or pick was to bury the *ejecta*, perhaps for sanitary reasons. The Essenes were said to be further divided into four classes (Josephus, *loc. cit.* § 10), but Josephus does not say what these classes were, and it is doubtful whether there is any foundation for the statement.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 7. From the context, it would seem that “ robbery ” here means the attempt to obtain possession of the secrets of the order by stealth. In an earlier part of the same section the neophyte is said to be sworn to “ keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains.”

<sup>3</sup> *I.e.* by sexual desire. The same idea is met with in the doctrines of Simon Magus, see Chap. VI, *infra*, and in many other sects. Cf. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, Bruxelles, 1908, pt I. Appx 1, “ La Séduction des Archontes ” for particulars.

<sup>4</sup> Dr Kohler, apparently a Rabbi of New York, gives other particulars of the Essenic initiation, including a song describing Heaven and Hell. This he takes from the *Testament of Job* described by him in the *Festschrift* called Kohut's *Semitic Studies*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 265 *sqq.* Among other things, he thinks the initiate was told that Satan was the cosmocrator, or

Finally, Josephus tells us that the Essenes take great pains in "studying the writings of the ancients and choose out of them what is most for the advantage of their soul and body," that they were much given to the practice of medicine, and had those among them "who undertake to foretell things to come by reading the holy books and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets,"—a statement which is explained by another passage<sup>1</sup> wherein he tells us that they believed "fate forms all things and nothing befalls men but according to it." From yet another passage<sup>2</sup> we learn that they were excluded from the Temple worship and offered their sacrifices for themselves instead of through the regular Jewish priesthood<sup>3</sup>.

That Josephus' account of the Essenes is fairly accurate and well informed appears from the fact that Philo of Alexandria, writing some fifty years earlier than he, also asserts that they numbered "in his opinion about 4000," and explains their abstention from the Temple worship as being due to their objection to sacrificing living animals<sup>4</sup>. Philo further tells us that there were among them no makers of warlike weapons, that they refrained from trade and had no slaves; but that their principal study was that of the Jewish Law and the "enquiry into the being of God and the creation of the universe."

ruler of the world, and that the sacred girdle was an amulet which would enable him both to defy Satan's snares, and to see the wonders of the world of angels. But I do not see that he brings forward any proof that either this book or what he calls the whole Job literature is attributable to the Essenes.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* Bk XIII. c. 5, § 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Id. op. cit.* Bk XVIII. c. 1, § 5.

<sup>3</sup> Their supposed sun-worship seems to resolve itself into the usual Jewish prayer at dawn, see Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after Exile*, New York, 1898, note on p. 251, and Jülicher, *Encyc. Bibl. s.v.* Essenes.

<sup>4</sup> Philo Judaeus, *Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, c. XII.; *id. Apologia* in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* Bk VIII. c. 13. The authenticity of both works has been attacked (for the controversy v. Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 347, n. 2) with some success. While therefore there can be no doubt that they are from the pen of some of Philo's school, it is not impossible that they may be later than Josephus and have copied his statements.

According to him, on the seventh or holy day when no work was done, they were accustomed to meet together, when one

“takes up the holy volume and reads it, and another of the men of the greatest experience [among them] comes forward and explains what is not very intelligible, for a great many precepts are delivered in enigmatical modes of expression and allegorically.”

He at the same time confirms Josephus' statement as to their having all goods in common.

Pliny in his *Natural History* also speaks of the Essenes ; but adds little to our knowledge, except the remark that it was the irksomeness of this present life which in his opinion gave rise to the sect<sup>1</sup>. Of the Christian heresiologists, Hippolytus in his *Philosophumena* merely repeats the statements of Josephus with the doubtfully accurate addition that the Essenes believed in a final conflagration of the world<sup>2</sup> and the eternal punishment of the damned ; while Epiphanius in his *Panarion* shows plainly that he had no first-hand knowledge of the Essenes and did not understand the traditional accounts of the sect which must have been extinct a long time before he wrote<sup>3</sup>. Porphyry in his treatise *on Abstinence* avowedly quotes from Josephus only<sup>4</sup>.

We see, then, that all we really know about the Essenes is contained in the accounts of Josephus and Philo ; but on this slender foundation there has been raised a vast superstructure of conjecture which the unprejudiced reader will probably consider too heavy for its base. The Essenes have been claimed by different writers as merely a strict order of Pharisees, as

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* Bk v. c. 15: *In diem ex aequo convenarum turba renascitur large frequentantibus, quos vita fessos ad mores eorum fortunæ fluctus agitat.*

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk ix. c. 27, pp. 465, 466, of Cruice. Later, he attributes the same doctrine to the Pharisees. His desire to show that in both cases it was derived by the Jews from the Pythagoreans or the Stoics is manifest.

<sup>3</sup> Epiphanius, *Panar.* Bk i. t. i. Haer. x. c. 1 (pp. 75, 76 of Oehler, vol. ii. pt 1). Epiphanius makes them a Samaritan sect.

<sup>4</sup> Porphyrius, *de Abstinencia*, Bk iv.

Zoroastrians, and as Buddhists. It has been argued that St John Baptist was an Essene and even that Jesus Himself belonged to the sect<sup>1</sup>. A more probable theory is that the Essenes derived some of their tenets from the Orphics, whose views were particularly prevalent at Alexandria in the time of the early Ptolemies, as well as in Asia Minor under the Seleucids. From the death of Alexander the Great until that of Antiochus Epiphanes, Palestine was, as we have seen, successively under the sway of these two rival dynasties, and it was the rapid progress of the Jews towards Hellenization in culture, religion, and morals that brought about the Maccabaeian uprising, in connection with which we first hear of the Essenes<sup>2</sup>. Hence this is the time when, if ever, we should expect the Orphic teaching to affect the Jews, and it is difficult to see whence the Essenes derived their views of the pre-existence of the soul—if that be indeed the construction to be placed upon the scanty and obscure words of Josephus—except from Orphism<sup>3</sup>. Save for this, however, there is no very cogent reason for attributing to this Jewish sect an Orphic origin. The use of white garments is in a hot climate too general a practice to be really characteristic, while the abstinence from the procreation of children and from food that has had life, although common to the Essenes and the Orphics<sup>4</sup>, may easily have come to the Jews

<sup>1</sup> Jülicher in *Encyc. Bibl. ubi cit.* and Ritschl and Lucius there quoted; J. B. Lightfoot, *Epistles to Colossians and to Philemon*, 1876, pp. 82–93, 348–419, and Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthums*, Leipzig, 1884, p. 156; Arthur Lillie, *Buddhism in Christendom*, 1887, *passim*; *id.* *Buddha and Buddhism*, Edinburgh, 1900, pp. 159 *sqq.* Buddhism is however posterior in time to Orphism, as Buddha did not die till B.C. 483 (see Fleet in *J.R.A.S.* 1909, p. 22), which was some years after the break-up of the Pythagorean school.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1 p. 154, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> There is no evidence of a belief in the pre-existence of the soul in Persian religion until the rise of the worship of Mithras in the 1st century B.C. See Chap. XII, *infra*. Marshall (*Hastings' Dict. of Bible*, s.v. Pre-existence) would find proof of the doctrine among the Jews in the Book of Wisdom and Philo. Both are much later than Orphism.

<sup>4</sup> But see note 2 p. 152, *supra*. Jewish priests after the Exile were forbidden to wear wool or to touch corpses, prohibitions which have an Orphic twang. See Ezekiel xlv. 17, 23.



from more quarters than one. To the Essene refusal to take oaths and to engage in trade there is no parallel whatever in the Orphic teaching<sup>1</sup>.

But, although there is thus little sign of a direct connection of the Essenes with the Orphics, there can hardly be any doubt that the Jewish sect were Gnostics in the larger sense in which the word is used above. The one distinguishing fact which stands out from Josephus' account of them is that they had secret doctrines of a kind differing from the beliefs of the rest of the Jews. This is shown by the great pains taken by them in the choice of neophytes, the "tremendous oaths" by which they, who forbade swearing in general, enforced secrecy upon them, and the prohibition to confide their teaching to any save by a long and tedious process of initiation. The only hints we have as to the nature of these doctrines are contained in Philo's statement that they were given to the enquiry into the being of God and the creation of the universe, and in that of Josephus that the initiate into these secrets was sworn "to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels." Dr Kohler and other Jewish writers see in Philo's statement a reference to the speculations of the later Jewish Cabala upon what is there called "the Mystery of the Chariot" and "the Mystery of the Creation<sup>2</sup>"; or in other words how the universe came forth from God and how it is governed. Although the proof of this is slender, it seems probable from the tendency of the whole of the Apocryphal literature of the time which dealt principally with the same subjects. It is evident that the Essene interpretation of the Old Testament, then recently made familiar to the Jews by the Alexandrian translation into Greek known as the Septuagint, must have been different in some respects from that of the other Jews, and that it must have been in some way likely to shock those who held by the traditional interpretation, as otherwise there would have been no necessity for the Essenes

So far from despising wealth, many of the Orphic Hymns pray for riches. Cf. Hymns x. xiii. xiv. xix. xl. etc. in Abel's *Orphica*.

K. Kohler, *Testament of Job*, in Kohut's *Semitic Studies*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 281, 282; Isidore Loeb in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, Paris, s.v. La Cabbale Juive, p. 587.

to bind their neophytes to so strict a secrecy. From Philo's language on this point it would seem that they interpreted both the Law and the Prophets in some non-natural manner, and it is likely enough that this took the shape of the juggling with the numerical values of the letters of which we find at least one instance in the Revelation of St John, and to which we shall have to return later<sup>1</sup>.

What now can be said in explanation of Josephus' statement that the Essenes were sworn to secrecy as to the "names of the angels"? The personal name of no angel appears in the Old Testament except in the Book of Daniel, now generally admitted to have been written in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, and there is on the face of it no reason why any Jew should wish to keep those there given—Gabriel and Michael—secret. But the knowledge of the name of an inhabitant of the spirit world was at the time of which we are speaking held throughout the East to give a magician full power over the being named, and this belief was universal in the magic of all the nations among whom the Jews had found themselves since the Captivity<sup>2</sup>. There is thus every likelihood that the Essenes used "the names of the angels" for magical purposes, and this is borne out by the tradition that it was as exorcists of demons and healers of disease that they were afterwards celebrated<sup>3</sup>. The manner in which these names were used may be judged from the tradition among the Jews that each tribe or order of demons was governed by an angel, and that his subjects were bound to obey upon being addressed by his name<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiii. 18. A. Hausrath, *History of New Testament Times* (Eng. ed.), 1878, vol. i. pp. 113–117, gives all the different processes of what is called the "Practical" Cabala with illustrations. Cf. Ad. Franck, *La Kabbale*, Paris, 1843, p. 167, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed. pt II. vol. i. pp. 318–334, gives references to, I think, all the authorities for this belief, which even at the present day is universal among primitive people.

<sup>3</sup> Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 338, for authorities. Exorcism for the healing of disease followed naturally from their demonology, which taught that diseases were caused by demons. See Hausrath, *Hist. of N. T. Times* (Eng. ed.), i. p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Hausrath, *op. cit.* i. pp. 124, 125; *Clementine Homilies*, Bk v. c. 5.

It was partly, and perhaps mainly, from this sect of the Essenes that there came, according to the general opinion of scholars, the apocryphal or secret literature which, from the name of its principal book, may be described under the generic name of Enochian<sup>1</sup>. In the *Book of Enoch* in its various forms was set forth a vast system of teaching on matters which the Canonical books of the Old Testament hardly touch. Here we have a complete cosmogony in which the mundane egg<sup>2</sup> of the Orphics plays its part; and the duties of the innumerable orders of angels and their connection with the heavenly bodies, the rebellion of Satan and his host against God, the fall of the Watchers, or angels set over the earth, through the beauty of mortal women, and the arrangement of the different heavens and hells all find a place in it<sup>3</sup>. But it also deals at great length with that Messianic hope which had for two centuries been dangled by the Prophets before Israel, and which, thanks to the materialistic sense in which it was interpreted by the vast majority of Jews, was to lead directly to their extermination as a nation<sup>4</sup>. The *Book of Enoch* and its many successors and imitators are full of predictions of the coming of a Messiah, who should lead the chosen race to the conquest of the world, and, what was to them probably an even more alluring prospect, to the overthrow and enslavement of all the other peoples in it<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Porter in Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, s.v. Apocrypha, and Wellhausen as there quoted. A list of the books comprised in the expression used in the text with conjectural dates and authorship is given by R. H. Charles in the same work, s.v. Apocryphal Literature. Cf. article under same heading (also by Charles) in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Prof. Charles is less inclined than earlier writers (e.g. Lightfoot and Kohler, *opp. cit.*) to credit the Essenes with the composition of the whole of this literature; but he admits that part of the *Book of Enoch*, chap. cviii. 1-15, is by Essene hands. The other parts attributed to the Essenes by Sieffert, Tideman, and Cheyne are indicated by him in *The Book of Enoch*, Oxford, 1893, pp. 13, 14, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (Morfill and Charles trans.), Oxford, 1896, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, *cit. sup.* pp. 24-33.

<sup>4</sup> *Id. op. cit.* chap. xc. 28-38; cf. *id. Crit. Hist.* p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, xc. 30.

In the earlier parts of the Ethiopic version—which is in itself, as Dr Charles has pointed out, but “a fragmentary survival of an entire literature that once circulated under the name of Enoch<sup>1</sup>”—it is described how

“the Holy and Great One will come forth from His dwelling, the God of the world, and going from thence He will tread on Mount Sinai and appear with His hosts, and in the strength of His might appear from heaven<sup>2</sup>.”

The judgment and destruction of all but the elect is next described, and the hurling down of the sinning angels into “the abyss of fire,” while the elect—that is, the Jews, or perhaps only the Essenes—are to live among millennial blessings of a material kind and in the enjoyment of universal peace<sup>3</sup>. This seems to represent fairly the earlier Essene teaching upon this point, and there is reason to suppose that it was written before the Maccabaeen struggles, after which the decadence of the Syrian Empire under Antiochus Epiphanes—hard pressed as he was by the Romans on one side and the Parthians on the other—allowed the Jews to obtain a temporary independence, and to set up a kingdom of their own for the first and last time in their history<sup>4</sup>. But the wine of military success and political independence proved too strong for the heads of the race which had hitherto been the tributaries and subjects of the Persian, the Greek, the Egyptian, and the Syrian Empires in turn, and, like their kinsmen the Arabs of Mohammed’s time and the Mahdists in our own, nothing less would now satisfy the fanatical among them than universal domination. In the later parts of the same work, the aspirations of the writers become more bloodthirsty and less spiritual, and we hear of a time “When the congregation

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Id. op. cit.* chap. i. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Id. op. cit.* chap. i. 8.

<sup>4</sup> David had the Philistines for suzerain, as Solomon had Egypt, cf. Stanley A. Cook, in *Encyc. Bibl. s.v. David*, and Maspero, *Hist. anc. des Peuples de l’Orient*, 1904, pp. 391, 422. Their successors, too, up to the Captivity seem to have always been tributaries to Assyria, Chaldaea, or Egypt. After that event, they were of course vassals to the Persian and Macedonian Empires.

of the righteous will appear<sup>1</sup>," a phrase which seems to cover the coming-forth of some sect or society till then kept in seclusion. "Then," it goes on to say, "will the kings and the mighty perish and be given into the hand of the righteous and holy<sup>2</sup>." In another part of the same book, we hear of angels being sent to "the Parthians and Medes, to stir up the kings and provoke in them a spirit of unrest, and rouse them from their thrones, that they may break forth from their resting-places as lions and as hungry wolves among the flocks<sup>3</sup>."

These are to make one final assault upon Jerusalem, and

"to tread under foot the land of His elect ones and the land of His elect ones will be before them a threshing floor and a path. But the city of My righteous [*i.e.* Jerusalem] will be a hindrance to their horses, and they will begin to fight among themselves, and their right hand will be strong against themselves, and a man will not know his brother, nor a son his father or his mother, till the number of corpses through their slaughter is beyond count, and their punishment be no idle one. And in those days Sheol will open his jaws, and they will be swallowed up therein, and their destruction will be at an end. Sheol will devour the sinners in the presence of the elect<sup>4</sup>."

This, according to the author who has made the most exhaustive study of the Enochian literature yet attempted, must have been written after the spirit which had inspired the Maccabaeen revolt had died away under the tyranny and luxury of the later

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, chap. xxxviii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* chap. xxxviii. 5. Cf. xlv. 4, "And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners."

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* chap. lvi. 5. This verse, which Dr Charles considers an interpolation, was evidently written in 40 B.C., when a Parthian army under Pacorus invaded Palestine and put a puppet of their own on the throne of Jerusalem, and before 39 B.C., when Publius Ventidius Bassus drove the Parthians back to their own country. Cf. Morrison, *Jews*, etc., pp. 58-61, and authorities there quoted.

<sup>4</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, chap. lvi. 6-8.

Jewish kings<sup>1</sup>. It seems very difficult, in the face of the many interpolations that the documents have undergone at the hands of Jewish and even Christian writers, to decide how much of these prophecies can be attributed directly to the sect of the Essenes; but there can be little doubt that they accurately represent the hope of supremacy over the nations which they shared with the Pharisees and the other fanatics among the Jewish nation. Only thus can we explain the community of goods and the very un-Jewish contempt for money-making which formed the most singular features of Essene practice<sup>2</sup>. To those who expected to be immediately put in possession of the whole earth all desire for worldly advancement must have been a matter of indifference. A similar conviction led to the maintenance of the same practice in the Christian Church so long as she continued to believe in the nearness of the Parusia or Second Coming of her Founder<sup>3</sup>.

From this dream of universal dominion, nothing seemed able to arouse the poorer Jews. In vain did the Sadducees, who comprised those of the nation who had become rich either by trading with the Gentile or by dependence on the luxurious Jewish Court, try to persuade the people that they had better make the best of the Hellenist culture thrust upon them than try to arrest its progress by fighting against powers that would crush them like glass when once sufficiently provoked<sup>4</sup>. In vain did the Syrian Empire, warned by the mistakes of Antiochus

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *op. cit.* p. 108. He there puts the date of the Similitudes, as this portion of the Book of Enoch is called, about a quarter of a century before the Parthian invasion. In that case, the prediction in the text would be about the only instance of fulfilled political prophecy known. But the discrepancy is doubtless to be explained by the theory of interpolation after the event.

<sup>2</sup> As in the admittedly Essene portion of the *Book of Enoch* (Charles, *op. cit.* chap. cviii. 8): "Who loved God and loved neither gold nor silver, nor any of the goods of the world."

<sup>3</sup> Compare with this the desire to rid themselves of this world's goods which seized upon the inhabitants of Western Europe in 1000 A.D., when it was believed that the Second Advent was at hand, and donations to the Church beginning "in view of the approaching end of the world" were common.

<sup>4</sup> Schürer, *Hist. of Jewish People* (Eng. ed.), II. pp. 157, 158.

Epiphanes in Hellenizing the Jews against their will, accord them the largest possible religious liberty and even acknowledge their right to self-government in exchange for tribute<sup>1</sup>. When the Romans, whom, according to their own account, they had called in to protect them against their Syrian overlords, destroyed once for all their chance of remaining an independent state, they not only gave the Jews the fullest liberty to practise their own religion, but set over them first a vassal king and then tetrarchs of Semitic blood, who might be supposed to moderate the too pronouncedly Western ideas of the Roman governor of Syria<sup>2</sup>. But these concessions were no more effective in inducing the Jews to settle down quietly as the peaceful tributaries of a great empire than had been the severities of Antiochus. They seized every opportunity to revolt, every time with the accompaniment of horrible atrocities committed upon those unfortunate Gentiles who for a moment fell into their power, until, some sixty years after the Destruction of the Temple by Titus, Hadrian had to wage against them the awful war of extermination which extinguished their nationality for ever. At the Fair of the Terebinth, when every able-bodied Jew left alive in Palestine was sold into slavery, the nation must have realized at last the vanity of its dream<sup>3</sup>.

During this time, that is to say, between the years 168 B.C. and 135 A.D., the flood of Apocalyptic literature never ceased to pour forth. All of it was what is called pseudepigraphical, that is to say, the books of which it was composed were falsely attributed to Enoch, the sons of Jacob, Moses, Job, Ezra, Baruch, and other personages of the Old Testament. Not all of these have come down to us, but a considerable number of books have survived. The pre-Christian ones that we have,

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.* Bk XIII. cap. 2, 3, where the tributes and taxes are set forth. Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 360, notes that the Jews showed no hostility to the tribute payable to the Greek kings, and that it was the Roman system of taxation which most embittered their feelings against the Gentiles.

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, *op. cit.* pp. 41, 42.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, in *L'Église Chrétienne*, chap. XI, tells the story with as much grace as truth. His account is largely taken from the investigations of Hartwig Derenbourg, himself of Jewish blood. Cf. Morrison, *op. cit.* pp. 198-206.

included, beside the Ethiopian *Book of Enoch* quoted above, the *Testaments of the XII Patriarchs*, the *Psalms of Solomon*, and part of the *Sibylline Oracles*. Later probably than the beginning of our era, appeared the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, which Dr Charles thinks was written in Egypt, the *Wisdom literature*, certainly having the same place of origin, the *Book of Jubilees* or little Genesis, the *Assumption of Moses*, the rest of the *Sibyllines*, the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, the later books of *Maccabees*, and the *Fourth Book of Esdras*<sup>1</sup>. One and all of these deal with the glories before the Jewish nation, when by supernatural help it will be able to turn the tables on its would-be civilizers, and one and all breathe the most virulent hatred against every body who is not a Jew<sup>2</sup>. They show no consensus of opinion as to the future lot of the Gentiles; for, while some teach that the victories of the Messiah will end in their complete

<sup>1</sup> They are arranged in the text as near as possible in the order of their probable dates. As to these and on the question of authorship, see Charles, *Crit. Hist.* pp. 172-226. The *Sibylline Oracles* can now be consulted in the scholarly edition of Rzach (*Sibyllina Oracula*, 1891), and in Dr Charles' *Apocrypha of the O.T.* (see below). The Greek text of the *Psalms of Solomon* with a French translation and critical introduction has been published by Dr J. Viteau and M. François Martin (*Les Psaumes de Salomon*, Paris, 1911). (The Odes of Solomon recently recovered for us by Dr Rendel Harris are most probably Christian hymns.) The Latin text of the 4th Book of Esdras is given by Bensly and James in *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. III. No. 2, and an English translation of part of it appears in the *Apocrypha of the A. V.* (see *Speaker's Commentary* for a good text and commentary by Lupton). The *Wisdom Literature*, i.e. the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Ecclesiasticus*, also appears in the *Apocrypha of the A.V.*, as do the Books of *Maccabees*. English versions of all the other books with critical notes and introductions have been published by Prof. Charles as follows: *Book of Enoch*, Oxford, 1893; *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, Oxford, 1896; *Apocalypse of Baruch*, 1896; *Assumption of Moses*, 1897; *Book of Jubilees*, 1902; and *Testament of the XII Patriarchs*, 1908. All the above appear in English dress in Dr Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the O.T.*, Oxford, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> See note 2 p. 149, *supra*. The essentially Jewish tendency towards hyperbole and exaggeration in language must, however, be allowed for. As someone has said, "Jacob I have loved, and Esau I have hated," in the mouth of a Jew means little more than that on the whole the speaker prefers Jacob to Esau. See also note 1 p. 163, *supra*.



annihilation, others declare that they will be preserved to become, as Isaiah had prophesied, the servants and hand-maidens of the Jews, to build up the walls of Jerusalem, and to be the herdsmen, ploughmen, and vinedressers of Israel<sup>1</sup>. Others again, held that the Gentiles would be hurled into Gehenna with the sinning angels<sup>2</sup>—even those who were dead being raised again for that purpose—and would there be tormented for ever in the presence of the Jews, who were to find one of their chief pleasures in the sight of their sufferings<sup>3</sup>.

“And I saw all the sheep that had been left, and all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds of the heaven,”

says the pseudo-Enoch in a vision wherein he describes under this figure the nations which had not been destroyed by the celestial hosts of the Messiah,

“falling down and doing homage to those sheep [*i.e.* the Jews] and making petition to and obeying them in every thing<sup>4</sup>.”

For the world was made for the Jews and the perversity of the Gentiles was divinely ordained for the express purpose that their “punishment” might be great<sup>5</sup>.

“All this I have spoken before thee, O Lord,” says the Apocryphal Ezra, “because thou madest the world for our sakes. As for the other people which also came of Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing, but are like unto spittle, and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel<sup>6</sup>. And now O Lord behold, these heathen, which have ever been reputed as nothing, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us. . . . If the world now be made for our sakes, why do we not enter into possession of our world? How long shall this endure?” And then comes Yahweh’s answer: “Behold I will call together all the kings of the earth to reverence me, which are from the rising of the Sun, from the South, from the East, and Libanus: to turn themselves one against

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xiv. 2; lx. 10; lxi. 5. All these passages are now said to be post-Exilic by Charles, *Crit. Hist.* p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, chap. xxx. 4, 5; chap. xxxvi. 11; 4 Esdras vii. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, chap. xlviii. 9; lxii. 9–12.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* chap. xc. 30.

<sup>5</sup> See note 3 p. 166, *infra*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Isaiah xl. 15.

another, and repay that they have done to thee. Like as they do yet this day unto my chosen, so will I do also, and recompense in their bosom<sup>1</sup>." "After the signs have come of which thou wast told before," says the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, "when the nations become turbulent, and the time of My Messiah is come, He shall both summon all the nations, and some of them He shall spare and some of them He shall slay. These things therefore shall come upon the nations which are to be spared by Him. Every nation which knows not Israel, and has not trodden down the seed of Jacob, shall indeed be spared. And this because some out of every nation shall be subjected to thy people. But all those who have ruled over you, or have known you, shall be given up to the sword<sup>2</sup>." So in the *Book of Jubilees* we are told that God

"sanctified [Israel] and gathered it from amongst all the children of men; for there are many nations and many peoples, and all are His and over all hath He placed spirits in authority to lead them astray from Him. But over Israel He did not appoint any angel or spirit<sup>3</sup>."

As for the delight in the sufferings of the damned Gentiles it is poetically expressed in the *Assumption of Moses* :

"For the Heavenly One will arise from His royal throne  
And He will go forth from His holy habitation  
And His wrath will burn on account of His sons

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

And the horns of the Sun will be broken and he shall be turned  
into darkness ;

And the moon shall not give her light, and be turned wholly  
into blood

And the circle of the stars shall be disturbed

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

For the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone,

And He will appear to punish the Gentiles

And He will destroy all their idols

Then thou, O Israel, shalt be happy

And thou shalt mount upon the neck of the eagle<sup>4</sup>

And the days of thy mourning will be ended

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

<sup>1</sup> 4 Esdras vi. 55-59 ; xv. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, chap. lxxii. 2-6.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, chap. xv. 31, 32.

<sup>4</sup> *I.e.* the Roman Empire.

And thou shalt look from on high and shalt see thy enemies in Gehenna,

And thou shalt recognize them and rejoice

And thou shalt give thanks and confess thy Creator<sup>1</sup>."

And in what has been called the Apocalypse of Salathiel, we hear that the righteous Jews will "have joy in seven ways":

"First of all they shall see with great joy the glory of him who receives them up, for they shall rest in seven orders. The first order because they have striven with great labour to overcome 'the innate evil thought'<sup>2</sup> which was fashioned together with them, that it might not lead them astray from life into death. The second order, because they see the round in which the souls of the ungodly wander and the punishment that awaits them....<sup>3</sup>."

A comparison of the dates of these documents lends little support to the view that this hatred of the Gentiles was wrung from the Jews by oppression; and there seems grounds for supposing that it had been present to their minds ever since their return from the Captivity<sup>4</sup>. Tacitus was certainly justified when he speaks of the nation as animated by bitter enmity against the rest of the human race<sup>5</sup>.

How far the Essenes were responsible for the whole of this later literature, it is now impossible to say. Nearly every one of the books above quoted have been claimed as of Essene origin by some scholar or another<sup>6</sup>, and those who, like

<sup>1</sup> Charles, *Assumption of Moses*, chap. x. 3, 5, 7, 8, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently a reminiscence of the Zoroastrian demon who is opposed to the Amshaspand Vohu Mano or "Good Thought." See Chapter VI, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> 4 Esdras vii. 91-93.

<sup>4</sup> The earliest document quoted is the part of the *Book of Enoch* which Prof. Charles considers was written between 166-161 B.C.; the latest, the *Fourth Book of Esdras*, which he puts at 90 A.D. Yet he shows that the hatred of the Gentiles and the hope that they would be eternally destroyed or made slaves to Israel were present many centuries earlier and are to be found in the writings attributed to Ezekiel, Haggai, Joel, and Zachariah, as well as in Isaiah. Cf. *Crit. Hist.* p. 160.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Historia*, Bk v. c. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Thus Jellinek, *Ueber das Buch der Jubilaen und das Noah-Buch*, Leipzig, 1855, *passim*, says that the Book of Jubilees is of Essene origin,

Dr Charles, are inclined to reduce Essene influence upon them to a minimum, admit that considerable interpolations have been made in most of the documents by Essene hands. Moreover, all those books which do not purport to be by Enoch himself either mention his name with peculiar reverence, or give the same account of celestial physics and other matters as the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, or quote it directly<sup>1</sup>. There seems, therefore, little doubt that all this literature came forth from the same school, and that it was directly or indirectly the result of Essene teaching.

A point more difficult to determine is how the Essenes managed to reconcile their secret doctrines with the reverence for the Mosaic Law and its promulgator which they undoubtedly professed<sup>2</sup>. There is no direct evidence with regard to this save Philo's remark quoted above as to their allegorical interpretation of Scripture. This, too, may have had its origin in Orphic practice, for we know that the Orphics were accustomed to carry allegory so far as to both materialize their gods, as when they spoke of Bacchus as Wine, and to deify abstractions, as when they made hymns to Health, Peace and other abstract conceptions as if they were actual persons<sup>3</sup>. But besides this, the Essenes probably practised a mode of interpretation peculiar to themselves, which they kept secret or confined to members of the sect. Something of the kind was not unknown among the Greeks, for some of the Orphic gold plates found in Magna

and Schmidt and Merx, *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des Alten Testaments*, I. II. (1868) pp. 111-152, make the same claim for the *Assumption of Moses* and so on. For the *Book of Enoch* itself see above.

<sup>1</sup> For the quotations from Enoch in the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* see Charles, Introduction to that book, p. lix; for those in the *Book of Jubilees* see *B. of J.* pp. 13, 36, 37, 53, 62-64, 102, 134, 146, 150, 212, 213; in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, see *A. of B.* p. 101 and notes; in the *Assumption of Moses*, see *A. of M.* x. 4, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *ubi cit.* in note 4 p. 151, *supra*, says (§ 8) that they honoured the name of Moses next after that of God Himself; and that any who blasphemed him was punished capitally.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Abel's *Orphica*, Fr. 160, 161, 162, 202, 203, 204. From the Orphics the practice passed into the Mysteries and the writings of the post-Christian Gnostics. See Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, pp. 69, 74-75.

Graecia are intended to be read acrostically<sup>1</sup>, and the Graeco-Egyptian magic papyri contain many instances of a similar use of the Homeric poems by which they could be converted into an oracle or fortune-telling book<sup>2</sup>. By such means any document can of course be made to mean anything, and the Essenes seem to have added to this the practice of isopsephism or regarding words as equivalent in sense which had the same numerical value. The most familiar instance of this is in the Revelation of St John where "the number of the Beast" is said to be "the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six"; or, in other words, Nero Caesar, whose name written in Hebrew letters is equivalent to the number given<sup>3</sup>. In like manner we read in the *Book of Enoch*, in the story of the sinning angels:

"This is the number of Kesbeël, who showed the head of the oath to the holy ones when he dwelt high above in glory, and its name is Bêqâ. And this angel requested Michael to show him the hidden name, that they might mention it in the oath, so that those who revealed all that was hidden to the children of men might quake before that name and oath. And this is the power of that oath, for it is powerful and strong, and he placed this oath Akæ in the hand of Michael<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Like the Gold Plate of Caecilia Secundina, Chapter IV, p. 133, *supra*. So the Sibylline Oracles contain the acrostic ΙΧΘΥΣ which covers the name and titles of Jesus, Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 535 and note. The Greeks must have caught the taste for such devices, for an acrostic is found in a treatise on astronomy by Eudoxos of Cnidos copied in the second cent. B.C. Many other instances are given by Brunet de Presle, *Les Papyrus Grecs du Musée du Louvre*, Paris, 1865, pp. 43, 44. He says with some reason that the practice was borrowed by the Greeks from the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Kenyon, *Gk. Pap. in B. M.*, Papyrus CXXI, pp. 83 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Hausrath, *op. cit.* pp. 114–116, where many other instances are given. The explanation of "Nero(n) Caesar" as the Number of the Beast is in fact as old as Irenaeus, who remarks that the variant 616 given in some texts is due to the omission of the final *n* in Latin. It does not seem to be seriously disputed by any modern theologian. Isopsephism however was not the invention of the Essenes, but of the Babylonians, among whom it was in use, to judge from Berossos, in the time of Alexander. See Alexander Polyhistor in Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, 2nd ed. p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Charles, *Book of Enoch*, chap. lxi. 13–15. Cf. *id.*, *The Apoc. etc. of the O.T.*, II. p. 234, where he has made some verbal alterations in the reading.

From the context, it would appear that the words Akâe and Bêqâ both cover the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name of JHVH, by means of which omnific word it is said the heavens and earth were created<sup>1</sup>. The mysterious name of Taxo given in the *Assumption of Moses* as that of the protagonist against Antiochus is doubtless to be interpreted in some such fashion<sup>2</sup>.

Of the history of the Essenes as an organized sect, we know hardly anything. If we accept Josephus' account of their numbers as relating to his own time<sup>3</sup>, it would seem that they were flourishing at the date of the Destruction of the Temple under Titus. This event would probably affect them little directly, because, as we have seen, they took no part in the Temple worship; and, scattered as they were through the villages of Palestine, they may easily have escaped the punishment meted out by the Romans to those towns which were the strongholds of the rebellion. But it is extremely improbable that they can have survived the War of Extermination under Hadrian, when the partizans of the false Messiah kept up a futile resistance in the country as well as in the towns, and Hadrian's general, Severus, had in consequence to lay the land desolate<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, it is not improbable that the sect may have taken an active part in the Revolt, which they may easily have looked upon as the fulfilment of their Messianic hopes, and may thus have perished under the stern measures of repression which the fanaticism and barbarities of the rebels forced upon the conquerors. At any rate, we hear little more of the Essenes after this date. But the fantastic method of interpreting Scriptures which they practised and probably introduced, lingered long, and, after being used by the earliest

<sup>1</sup> Hausrath, *op. et loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *A. of M.* chap. ix. 1, and the note beginning on p. 35, *op. cit.* Hausrath, *op. cit. sup.* pp. 116, 117, thinks the name is arrived at by the process called Atbash.

<sup>3</sup> If the authenticity of the Fragment quoted above from Philo could be established, it would seem probable that Josephus simply copied the figure from this last, and that 4000 was the number of the Essenes about 20 A.D.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 209.

Christian writers<sup>1</sup>, was revived, as has been said, by the Cabalists of the Middle Ages, and has even survived into our own time. It was especially high in favour with those numerous bodies of heretics who in the first three centuries of our era asserted that knowledge was the one thing needful for salvation and were thus called, both by themselves and by their opponents the Fathers of the Church, by the generic and distinctive name of Gnostics<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Hausrath, *op. cit.* pp. 116, 117, for examples. By the method called Temura he gets *Romah hagedôlah* for Armageddon in the Canonical Apocalypse. So Justin Martyr, *Cohort.* c. xxiv. says that Moses is unintelligible without mystic insight, and that the name of Christ contains a hidden meaning (*2nd Apol.* c. vi.).

<sup>2</sup> Thus Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* Bk I. c. xii. § 11, p. 146, Harvey, makes Marcus the heresiarch show that Alpha and Omega, the name given to Jesus [?] in Revelation, means the Dove which descended upon Him at His baptism, because it has the same numerical value (*περιστερά*) of 801.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRE-CHRISTIAN Gnostics : SIMON MAGUS

WE see, then, that the Essenes, in spite of the quietism and love of peace that they professed, became in the long run either the instigators of political revolt or, at best, the tools of those who thought to make use of the fanaticism excited by their teaching in order to throw off the yoke of the Gentiles. But these fanatics were almost exclusively the Jews of Judaea, whose adherence to their own institutions caused them to leave Babylon, where they were fairly well off, to be cooped up in a land which in no time can have yielded an easy subsistence to a large number of souls<sup>1</sup>. That people so circumstanced, confronted with a power vastly superior to their own, and resolutely bent on compelling its subjects to enter into its own system of orderly government, should have looked to rebellion and supernatural help as their sole means of escape, was only to be expected. But there were besides a great number of Jews dispersed among the heathen, who had succeeded in acquiring vast wealth together with the power which wealth brings with it; and these were by no means inclined to upset the settled order of things which the rise of the Roman Empire had brought into the East. To the humble fisherman, vinedresser or husbandman of Judaea, daily vexed and harassed by the Roman tax-gatherer and Roman police measures, the Roman peace, the freedom from foreign conquest, and the higher standard of

<sup>1</sup> The fanaticism of the Palestinian Jews in time affected their co-religionists elsewhere, as when the Jews in Asia Minor rebelled and committed atrocities in the reign of Trajan. See Morrison, *Jews under Roman Rule*, p. 191, and Renan, *Les Évangiles*, Paris, 1877, p. 503. Probably such outbreaks were condemned by those of the nation who had anything to lose, as was certainly the case during the Revolt under Hadrian.



comfort that came in with the legions, must have appeared far less desirable than they did to the rich trader of Alexandria, Caesarea, or Damascus, whose aptness in taking advantage of the foibles of his rulers had enabled him to imitate their luxury and in some cases to share their power<sup>1</sup>. Yet, with the tenacity peculiar to their nation, even these rich Jews outside Palestine, while adopting gladly enough the material benefits of the Graeco-Roman civilization, clung firmly to the one exclusively national possession which remained to them, the Law of Moses with all its observances. They were, however, quite sharp enough to see that the rules laid down for the conduct of a loosely-compacted mass of nomad tribes suddenly flung among hostile neighbours were unfitted to a more settled civilization; and the thinkers among them were put to much pains to discover some means by which they could claim their share of Hellenistic culture without ceasing to be Jews<sup>2</sup>. At first this generally took the form of pseudonymous writings bearing the name of some author respected by the Greeks, and designed to prove that all the Hellenistic arts, sciences, and doctrines were derived from the Hebrew patriarchs. Thus, verses were ascribed to Orpheus and the Sibyl, and historical works to Hecataeus of Abdera and a certain Aristaenus, having for their object the praise of the Jewish nation, which were certainly not written by the authors whose names were appended to them. So Artapanus' book "On the Jews" claimed that the Egyptians were indebted to the Hebrews for all they knew, including even the worship of their gods, and that this went back to the days of Abraham, who availed himself of his stay in Egypt to teach astrology to the Pharaoh of his time<sup>3</sup>.

History, however, was at all times much less to the taste of the Jews than metaphysics, and the many teachers of philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 375; Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, 1887, pp. 468-482; *Greek World under Roman Sway*, 1890, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, Eng. ed. II. pp. 157, 158. One of the best proofs of this tendency is the fashion among all classes of Jews at this period of giving their children Greek names. See Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 480. Even among the Apostles we have Andrew and Philip.

<sup>3</sup> Schürer, *op. cit.* II. pp. 206, 306, 309; Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 395.

scattered through the Hellenistic world found in them eager scholars, who were willing to listen respectfully to any doctrine, so long as it could be shown to be not inconsistent with their national religion and traditions. The most sincere attempt thus to combine Hellenic and Jewish teaching that has come down to us is that of Philo of Alexandria, who wrote probably shortly after the Birth of Christ. In his system<sup>1</sup>, God is undefinable and has no qualities that can be perceived by man. As He is absolutely perfect, He cannot come into contact with matter, and all His dealings with it must therefore be conducted through intermediate beings. These intermediate beings are the powers or attributes of God, inconsistently, as Zeller points out, figured by Philo "as at once independent hypostases and immanent determinations of the Divine existence<sup>2</sup>." All the Divine Powers are summed up in the Logos or Word of God, who is not only their chief but their source, and the great intermediary between God and the universe. He is neither unbegotten nor begotten after the manner of finite things, but is the vicegerent and ambassador of God, who constantly makes intercession for the world. As for man, his soul is itself nothing but one of those powers of God which in another state of existence are called angels or daemons, and it is his material body which is the source of all evil, and the prison of the soul. Man can only free himself from this by resisting the allurements of the senses, which God puts it into his heart to do. By such resistance, he can exceptionally and occasionally acquire such virtue that, even in this life, he may attain to the Divine Vision, when he will be "lifted above and out of himself," and the Spirit of God will henceforth dwell in him and "stir him like the strings of a musical instrument." In the ordinary way, however,

<sup>1</sup> Schürer, *op. cit.* II. pp. 369-380, following, as he tells us, Zeller, gives an excellent and coherent account of Philo's system, which see. As Schürer points out (*op. cit.* II. p. 368), Philo "hellenized" so thoroughly that practically the only Judaic elements in his system are the assertion of monotheism, a contempt for image-worship, and the claim that the Jews possessed through the Mosaic revelation the highest religious knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Schürer, *op. cit.* II. p. 372. For a definition of hypostasis in this connection and its original equivalence to *οὐσία* and *substantia* (as in the *Quicunque vult*), see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1888, p. 275.

his emancipation will only take place when his soul returns to its original incorporeal condition, a reward which is bestowed on those who have kept themselves free from attachment to this sensuous body<sup>1</sup>.

That people holding tenets so far removed from anything in the Law and the Prophets should form themselves into small sects or societies<sup>2</sup> and take other means for their propagation is only natural, and no doubt many such sects of which we have lost all trace existed in secret among the Hellenizing Jews at the beginning of the Christian era<sup>3</sup>. Such a sect were probably the Sethiani described by Hippolytus, whose "entire system," according to the author of the *Philosophumena*, was derived from "the ancient theologians Musaeus, Linus, and Orpheus, who elucidates especially the ceremonies of initiation as well as the Mysteries themselves<sup>4</sup>." So far as Hippolytus explains their system, which he appears to have very imperfectly understood, it set forth three principles, which he calls "Light, Darkness, and an intermediate one which is Spirit"; but all the passages quoted from the "Paraphrase of Seth," which he declares to be the work of the sect in question, refer for their authority to the Old Testament, which it is evident the Sethiani received as a real revelation<sup>5</sup>. But the one of these half-Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Were those who did not attain to this height in Philo's opinion annihilated or re-incarnated? His view that for the wicked this life is the real hell (*De congr. erud. grat.* § XI.) would suit either theory; but in *de Cherub.* § I. it is plain that he contemplates the eternal punishment of the damned.

<sup>2</sup> Secret, not from the jealous motive of the Gnostics, but because if their opinions had become generally known they would have been cast out of the synagogue.

<sup>3</sup> So Renan, *Les Évangiles*, p. 452. It is quite possible that the sect of the Essenes may have included many divisions.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk v. c. 3, p. 218, Cruice.

<sup>5</sup> M. de Faye is probably right in saying (*Étude Critique des Documents du Gnosticisme Chrétien*, Paris, 1913, pp. 352, 353) that the Sethiani were never a very important sect. Stähelin's theory (*Die Gnostischen Quellen Hippolyts*, Leipzig, 1890) that Hippolytus was deceived by a forger who drew all his "heresies" from one document (see Chapter VII, *infra*) is too fantastic to be correct, but it has done good service in calling attention to the family likeness between most of the systems which he sketches. Cf.

half-Gentile sects of which we have the most detailed account is that which passed under the name of Simon Magus, whom the Fathers of the Church were unanimous in describing as the parent and origin of all later Gnosticism<sup>1</sup>.

This Simon, the New Testament describes as a man who had formerly "used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying 'This man is the great power of God<sup>2</sup>'." The author of the Acts then goes on to say that Simon "believed" and was baptized by Philip, and that when Peter and John came from Jerusalem to Samaria, "he offered them money saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." It is from this offer, which seems to betray a desire to set up a Church of his own, that his name, curiously enough, has since been associated in ecclesiastical law with the offence of buying and selling benefices or cures of souls<sup>3</sup>. Of Simon's future career, however, the Acts of the Apostles tell us nothing save that he left Peter with the request for the Apostle's prayers on his behalf. It is evident, from the text quoted above, that both Simon's sorceries and his acclamation by the people as "the great power of God" took place before his conversion to Christianity, whether this was real or feigned. Hence, Simon must have been at the time already the leader of a school or sect, and as the events narrated are in the same book set out before the Conversion of St Paul and his preaching to the Gentiles, this sect must have been a pre-Christian one<sup>4</sup>.

E. de Faye, *Intro. à l'Ét. du Gnost.*, Paris, 1903, p. 68. We are not likely to reach any more definite conclusion unless some lucky discovery reveals to us the sources of Hippolytus' compilation.

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 16, p. 191, Harvey; Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, Bk VI. c. 20, p. 267, Cruice; Augustine, *de Haeres. lib.* cc. I., II., III.; Praedestinatus, *de Haer.* Bk I. c. 1; Pseudo-Tertullian, *adv. omn. Haer.* c. I. etc.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> From the story in Acts, it appears that what Simon tried to buy was the power of ordination. The offence in modern ecclesiastical jurisprudence seems to be the obtaining the priestly office by purchase rather than by merit or gift.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Amélineau, *Gnosticisme Égyptien*, p. 51.

That this sect was also one of those which sought to reconcile Judaism with Hellenism seems antecedently probable. Samaria had been stripped of a great part of its former inhabitants by Alexander the Great and Ptolemy Soter, who had colonized it by "Macedonian" settlers, probably of Syrian blood<sup>1</sup>. These colonists had accepted without difficulty the religious reforms of Antiochus Epiphanes, and had offered that king, according to Josephus, to dedicate their temple on Mt Gerizim to Zeus Hellenios<sup>2</sup>. Later, on the death of Antiochus, John Hyrcanus, the ethnarch or high-priest of the Jews, on the same authority, "revolted from the Macedonians," invaded Samaria, besieged its chief city and, when he gained possession of it, entirely demolished it<sup>3</sup>. Gabinius, when proconsul of Syria, rebuilt this and other cities which had been destroyed by the Jews, and Herod the Great about 25 B.C. restored and beautified it while renaming it Sebaste in honour of Augustus<sup>4</sup>. These events had intensified the hatred already existing between the Jews and the Samaritans, and this was not diminished by the possession by the latter of the Mt Gerizim temple which was in some sort the rival of that of Jerusalem<sup>5</sup>. To judge from its later developments, the religion of the Samaritans at the beginning of the Christian era retained little of Judaism besides a reverence for the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses<sup>6</sup>, and its other elements were apparently Greek. We should therefore expect to find in Simon's teaching before his meeting with the Apostles, a leaning towards a mixed religion in which Greek elements played the chief part, although the sanction attached to it might be Jewish.

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, *op. cit.* p. 351. Cowley in Cheyne's *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. Samaritans, omits this; but see Josephus, *Ant.* Bk XII. c. 2, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *op. cit.* Bk XII. c. 5, § 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* *op. cit.* Bk XIII. c. 10, § 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* *op. cit.* Bk XV. c. 9, § 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Neither at Jerusalem, nor on this mountain [Gerizim] shall men worship the Father," John iv. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Cowley in *Encyc. Bibl.* s.v. Samaritans, col. 4260. According to Renan, *Les Évangiles*, p. 451, the Samaritans at the beginning of our era were divided into a great number of sects, all more or less attached to Simon. The authorities he quotes are, however, too late to establish this satisfactorily.

Such an expectation is abundantly justified by the evidence of post-Apostolic writers. The documents known as the *Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions* are now generally admitted to be a kind of religious novel or romance composed for edification, and no consensus of opinion exists as to their date, which has been taken by many learned critics as ranging from the 1st to the 14th century A.D.<sup>1</sup> They set forth with much detail how Simon, after his first meeting with St Peter in Samaria, everywhere opposed the chief of the Apostles, and followed him about on many of his journeys, disputing with him at great length, until finally put to flight by the superior dialectic of Peter<sup>2</sup>. The Apocryphal *Acts of Peter and Paul*, which seem to be either wholly or in part earlier than 275 A.D., further narrate that Simon attempted to convert to his heresy the Emperor Nero, by flying over the Campus Martius at Rome in a car drawn by demons; but was vanquished by St Peter, who by a solemn adjuration caused him to fall violently to the earth and thus to perish miserably<sup>3</sup>. This story became later the universal tradition of the Catholic Church. All the patristic writers agree that Simon Magus was accompanied in his missionary journeys by a woman of immoral life whom he called the Ennoia or Thought of God, and declared to be a reincarnation of Helen of Troy<sup>4</sup>, while one of the Clementine documents makes her, together with Simon, to have been

<sup>1</sup> The question was discussed and resolved, as far as it could be in the then state of our information, by Salmon in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, s.v. Clementines. Mgr. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, Eng. ed. 1909, p. 96, n. 2, sums up in favour of their ultimate derivation from the *Preaching of Peter* composed at the end of the 11th or beginning of 12th cent. He thinks the Clementines orthodox save for a slight Arian tendency.

<sup>2</sup> So Theodoret; but this was a common form in the patristic accounts of such disputes. It is repeated in the dispute of Archelaus with Manes, mentioned in Chapter XIII, *infra*, which see.

<sup>3</sup> See Tischendorf's edition, *passim*. The age of the book may be guessed by its containing the *Quo Vadis* story quoted by Origen.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 16, p. 191, Harvey; Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 19, p. 264, Cruice; Epiphanius, *Panar.* Bk I.; *Haer.* XXI. c. 2 (p. 125 of Oehler's vol. II. pt. 1).

among the followers of John the Baptist<sup>1</sup>. There is no external corroboration of either story; and such accusations of immorality were too frequently bandied about between the early Christians and their adversaries for any particular weight to be laid upon them<sup>2</sup>. Nor need the latest German theory, that Simon Magus is in the Clementine literature but a pseudonym for St Paul as the supposed opponent of St Peter, be discussed here<sup>3</sup>.

The first writer who gives us any authoritative account of Simon's pre-Christian teaching is Hippolytus, who in his *Philosophumena* quotes freely from a book which he attributes to Simon and calls the *Great Announcement*<sup>4</sup>. Whether this be really Simon's work or no, its quotation in the *Philosophumena* at least proves that a sect bearing his name existed in the sub-Apostolic age, and that they held the doctrines set forth in Hippolytus' quotations from this document, which can hardly have been due to anyone else in the first instance than Simon himself<sup>5</sup>. In the *Great Announcement* the First Cause of

<sup>1</sup> *Clementine Homilies*, II. c. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Marcion and Marcus, both leaders of Gnostic sects, were both accused by the Catholics of seduction, while the Pagans naturally put the worst construction on the intimacy existing between confessors and martyrs and their converts, as is evidenced by the story of Paul and Thekla.

<sup>3</sup> This seems to have been first set on foot by Baur and the Tübingen school, and has lately been revived by Schmiedel in the *Encyc. Bibl. s.v.* Simon Magus. Even if we were to admit that it was well founded with regard to the *Clementines*, it would not get rid of the testimony of the Acts and of Justin Martyr that Simon Magus had an actual historical existence.

<sup>4</sup> Ἀπόφασις μεγάλη. "Declaration" would perhaps be a better translation of the word; but that given in the text is the one used by most writers on the subject.

<sup>5</sup> Simon's authorship of the book has been defended by Renan (*Les Apôtres*, Paris, 1866, p. 267 and note) and attacked by many other writers. Salmon, *op. cit.*, Schmiedel, *op. cit.*, and Stock in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (last edition), *s.v.* Simon Magus, aver that there were two Simons, one the personage of the Acts, and the other, a Gnostic leader of the II<sup>nd</sup> cent. to whom or to whose followers the *Great Announcement* is to be attributed. This theory, although attractive, would prove too much; for Justin Martyr, himself a Samaritan, has no doubt that Simon the heresiarch is the Simon of the Acts, and if he is wrong in this, a matter which may well have been within his own personal knowledge, Hippolytus is our best and earliest authority for Simon's doctrines.

all things is declared to be fire, on the strength of the statement in Deuteronomy that "God is a burning and consuming fire<sup>1</sup>." This Infinite or Boundless Power, as he calls it, Simon held to be not simple but two-fold, having two natures, a hidden and a manifold one, so intermingled that "the hidden one is concealed in the manifest, and the manifest comes into being from the hidden one," by which, as we shall see later, he meant male and female. The manifest, again, can be perceived by the senses like things with an actual existence, while the hidden nature can only be apprehended by the mind, or in other words imagined. In all this he seems at first sight to be echoing, as Hippolytus points out<sup>2</sup>, the notions of Plato upon the Intelligible (τὸ νοητόν) and the Sensible (τὸ αἰσθητόν), those of Aristotle on Power or Potentiality (δύναμις) and Actual Existence (ἐνέργεια), and, as Hippolytus does *not* say, those of Philo upon the First Cause and the Logos<sup>3</sup>. The Cosmos or ordered universe came into being, Simon goes on to say, from the unbegotten or self-existent fire, by means of six "Roots" called respectively Mind (Νοῦς) and Thought ("Εννοια)<sup>4</sup>, Voice (Φωνή) and Name ("Ονομα), Reason (Λογισμός) and Desire ('Ενθύμησις). Although it is not here formally stated, it is noteworthy that this is a system of couples or pairs, the name of one of each of the above pairs being masculine and the other feminine<sup>5</sup>. In these six,

<sup>1</sup> Deut. iv. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 1, § 9, p. 247, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> As when he says that the Logos is not God, but his reflection. See Philo, *de Somn.* i. 41 (p. 656 of Mangey). "Just as those who cannot gaze upon the sun may yet gaze upon a reflection of it." Cf. Hatch, *H. L.* p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus and Epiphanius (where before quoted) both call this second partner in the first pair of "Roots" "Εννοια. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 1, § 13, p. 251, Cruice, has 'Επίνοια. Does this mean "after-thought" or "second thought" as showing her posteriority to Nous? At any rate it is some indication that he is copying from a different source than that of his predecessors. King (*Gnostics and their Remains*, 2nd ed. p. 61) would translate 'Ενθύμησις by "thought," while he calls "Εννοια "Intelligence." The Abbé Cruice translates 'Ενθύμησις "Conceptio." It seems here to mean Desire not in a fleshly but a mental sense.

<sup>5</sup> The names of "Ονομα and Φωνή are placed in the reverse order to the others, inasmuch as in this pair the feminine comes first. This is curious because in the same section they are compared to the Sun and Moon, the sex of which is transposed in several mythologies.



Simon imagined that the Boundless Power existed potentially, but not actually, that is to say, that each of them represented one particular aspect or quality under which the Supreme Being might be considered, but had no existence apart from Him, while it required the addition together of all the six to make up His entire being. A similar conception seems to underlie the Zoroastrian idea of the six Amshaspands, from which it is likely enough that Simon copied this part of his system<sup>1</sup>. It is here that we meet for the first time in Gnosticism with the idea of emanation or the flowing-forth of the Divine nature, which differs entirely from that of creation, whether *e nihilo* or from pre-existing matter, inasmuch as the emanation still remains connected with the parent source and never forms an entity distinct from it<sup>2</sup>.

We see, then, that in Simon's system, the primal world was a hebdomad or consisted of seven Powers, being the three pairs of Roots enumerated above together with a seventh, their source, in whom they were all summed up<sup>3</sup>. But after this, and apparently created by it, is a second or intermediate world, as to which the *Great Announcement* thus expresses itself :

<sup>1</sup> The names of the Amshaspands of Zoroaster are, *Vohu Mano*, or Good Mind, and *Asha Vahishta*, or Truth ; *Khshathra Vairya*, or Right Law, and *Spenta Armaiti*, or Wisdom ; *Haurvetat*, or Good Health, and *Ameretat* or Immortality. The likeness between this and Simon's system has been noticed by, among others, Harvey the editor of Irenaeus, in his Introduction to that author, pp. lxx sqq. For the resemblance between post-exilic Judaism and Zoroastrianism, see Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life*, pp. 157, 210, 251, 257 sqq. But see p. 197, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> Emanation is well defined by Mallet (*Culte de Neit à Saïs*, Paris, 1888, pp. 212, 213) as "a perpetual flowing-forth, which does not imply any effort, and which consequently neither exhausts nor even diminishes the productive principle." Emanations, however, he goes on to say, become weaker and less perfect the further they get from their first source. The first mention I can find of the word is in Plutarch (*de Is. et Os.* c. XLIX.) who says that the visible Cosmos is "the flowing forth (*ἀπορροή*) and displayed image of Osiris."

<sup>3</sup> Curiously enough, the author of the *Clementine Homilies* adopts this notion for orthodoxy, when he makes St Peter (xvii. c. 9) declare that God possesses six "extensions" having the nature of six infinities and that He with them makes up the "mystery of the hebdomad."

“Unto you therefore I say what I say, and write what I write. The writing is this. There are two stocks of all the Aeons put together, having neither beginning nor end, springing from one Root, the which is Power-Silence, invisible, incomprehensible (*ἀκατάληπτος*)<sup>1</sup>. Of which two stocks, one appears above, which is a great Power, the Mind of the universes, which pervades all things, and is male: the other [appears] below, a great Thought, is female, and gives birth to all things. Thus, these, corresponding to one another<sup>2</sup>, form a pair (*συζυγία*), and show forth the Middle Space (*διάστημα*), an incomprehensible air having neither beginning nor end. In this is the Father who sustains (*βαστάζων*) all things and nourishes all those things which have a beginning and end<sup>3</sup>. This is he who standeth, hath stood, and shall stand<sup>4</sup>, being both a male and female power after the likeness of the pre-existing Boundless Power<sup>5</sup>, which has neither beginning nor end, but exists in Oneness (*Μονότης*). For the Thought which came forth from the power in Oneness became two<sup>6</sup>. And each of them was one. For he, when he contained her within himself, was alone, nor was he the first, although he existed before, but having appeared from himself, a second came into being. But he was not called Father before [Thought] had named him Father. Just as, then, he drawing forth himself from himself

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* “which cannot be grasped,” “intangible,” as in the Athanasian Creed.

<sup>2</sup> *ἀντιστοιχέω* “set over against each other.” It seems to be a term used in logic.

<sup>3</sup> This is *not* the Supreme Father, but the Logos or his representative in the world succeeding his. It is with this being that Simon according to the author of the Clementines (*Hom. II. c. 24*) identified himself.

<sup>4</sup> *Ὁ ἐστῶς, στᾶς, στησόμενος*. This seems to be the expression which the author of the Canonical Apocalypse is trying to reach in his fearful solecism *ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος*. See Revelation i. 4.

<sup>5</sup> So the Supreme Being of Simon is androgyne.

<sup>6</sup> The difficulty in deducing both male and female divinities from a male or sexless Supreme being has led to some strange mythology. The Egyptians cut the knot in an effective if coarse way. “Thus from one god I became three gods,” says the Egyptian deity “the Lord of the Universe,” in his account of the Creation. See Budge, “Papyrus of Nesi-Amsu,” and *Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum*, pp. xiii, xiv and 14, 15. Was the author of the *Apophysis* acquainted with this story? The Clementines make Simon’s associates Egyptians or rather Alexandrians. See *Clem. Hom. Bk IV. c. 6*.

manifested to himself his own Thought, so the same Thought when she appeared did not create him, but, beholding him, concealed the Father, that is to say, Power, within herself, and [thus] there exists a male-and-female (*i.e.* hermaphrodite) Power-and-Thought. For Power does not in any way differ from Thought, they being one. Without the things which are above is found Power; without those which are below, Thought. Thus, there is that, also, which appeared from them, the which being one is found to be two, a male-and-female containing the female within itself. This one is Mind in Thought; for they, being one when undivided (*ἀχώριστος*) from one another, are [yet] found to be Two<sup>1</sup>."

This statement seems at first to be merely an explanation and recitation of what has been previously said as to the emanation of the "Roots" from the Boundless Power, and by no means justifies the words of the *Great Announcement* in which it is magniloquently proclaimed to be "the Book of the Showing-forth of Voice and Name from the Thought of the Great Boundless Power. Wherefore it will be sealed up and hidden and veiled and will rest in the habitation wherein the root of the worlds is established (*θεμελιώω*)<sup>2</sup>." But when we examine the words just quoted by the light of the other systems said to be derived from Simon's, we see that they really indicate the belief of the author in a succession of worlds, wherein every later or lower one is a reflection, as in a glass, of that which was above it<sup>3</sup>. These lower worlds, like the primal one, should each contain three pairs of "Roots," emanating from one source like rays from a lamp or other source of light. It also seems that this source is, alike in the primal world and its successors, in itself potentially both male and female, that is to say, the female nature, which alone has the power of conception or producing new beings, was originally concealed within the other as a thought is concealed within the mind, and only becomes

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 1, § 18, pp. 261, 262, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 1, § 9, p. 246, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnosticisme Égyptien*, p. 39, makes this perfectly clear. Cf. Ad. Franck, "Le Gnosticisme Égyptien" in *Journal des Savants*, Avril, 1888, pp. 212, 213. Hatch (*H.L.* p. 205) points out that it is the doctrine of "Philo and the Platonists."

comprehensible when utterance is given to it. Hence each of these Powers or, as Simon here calls them for the first time, aeons, like the Supreme Being, has a double aspect. Seen from below, that is to say, as it appears to the aeon which succeeds it, it is female, that is to say, a source of being. To that which is above it, or earlier in emanation, it is male, that is to say, it is the cause of conception, and also the sustainer and director at once of the conceiver and of that which she conceives<sup>1</sup>.

Why now did Simon, or whoever wrote under his name, use such obscure and at first sight unintelligible terms for his speculations on the nature of the Supreme Being and the origin of the world? Simply, it would seem, that he might reconcile two things which like certain chemicals found themselves in presence of each other without any affinity for combination. These were the Mosaic Law which, since the Captivity, both Jew and Samaritan held themselves bound to treat as divinely inspired<sup>2</sup>, and the Greek "theological" ideas which then pervaded the whole civilized world and were at the time accepted by all educated men who thought about such subjects in much the same way as are in these days the conclusions of physical science<sup>3</sup>. This forced him and others who attempted to found a religion acceptable to both Jew and Greek, to use language which could be interpreted in their own sense by either. His Supreme Being is One, as Israel declared that her God was One, but, by a not immodest metaphor, he contains within himself

<sup>1</sup> As will be seen later, the post-Christian Gnostics of the II<sup>nd</sup> cent. generally attributed the existence of evil to the escape of one of the syzygies from the control of her spouse and her consequent fall into matter. See Chapter VIII, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> The excessive reverence of the Samaritans for the Pentateuch is well brought out by Cowley in the *Encyc. Bibl. s.v. Samaritans*. He says it was the only part of the Jewish books which they took over and held sacred (col. 4260). Simon in the *Great Announcement* thought it necessary to "explain" each of the Five Books separately. See Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 1, §§ 15, 16, pp. 253-258, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout all the philosophical and religious literature of the time, it seems to have been sufficient to quote "Orpheus and the other theologists" to command a hearing. See Clement of Alexandria, *passim*, for examples.

the power of becoming both male and female, as Adonis, or Attis, or Dionysos, or, to take the mythological person he most resembles, the Orphic Phanes, was both male and female<sup>1</sup>. Simon also goes out of his way to affirm that his first syzygy or pair, Mind and Thought, are in the second world called Heaven and Earth, and thus forms a pretty close parallel to the Orphic couple Uranos and Ge<sup>2</sup>. But he is careful to mix with this explanations which shall also accord with the account of creation given in the Book of Genesis. He who standeth, hath stood, and will stand, *i.e.* the Eternal Being who is not liable to fall or corruption, and is the "Father" of the "Middle Space" is no less the "I am that I am" of Exodus than the Father of gods and men of Homer. So, too, his companion from the beginning, called Silence, because she has no independent existence until he gives utterance to his thought, resembles the Nux or Night of Orpheus from whom Phanes begot Heaven and Earth; but she is also, as Simon expressly says, the Spirit of God which moved over the face of the waters in the Mosaic account of the Creation<sup>3</sup>. If, again, Simon makes his first pair of "Roots" in the second world Heaven and Earth, his second pair, Voice and Name, he declares to be equivalent to the Sun and Moon, and his third, Reason and Desire, to Air and Water<sup>4</sup>. This, he expressly says, is because the Book of Genesis says that three clear days elapsed before the Sun and Moon came into being, and these three "days" are an allusion to the Boundless Power and the first pair Mind and Thought<sup>5</sup>. To a much greater extent than Philo, therefore, Simon uses the religious traditions of both Greeks and Hebrews to give sanction to his own speculations.

The use of the word *aeon*, which our English Testament translates "age" (*saeculum*) as the generic name of the six Roots or Powers reflected in the second universe, seems also to have peculiar signification in this connection. Among the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 123, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Fr. 239 in Abel's *Orphica*.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 1, § 14, pp. 252, 253, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Bk vi. c. 1, § 13, pp. 251, 252, Cruice.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid. loc. cit.* Cf. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 39.

Greeks, Hesiod sang of a golden age, succeeded by others of silver, of brass, of one unnamed metal, and finally one of iron ; and the Orphics, working after their manner on older materials, assigned the first of these ages to their god Phanes, and the others to Night, Uranos, Kronos, and Zeus in succession, asserting that the last age would be that of Dionysos<sup>1</sup>. The use of the word by Simon seems to show that he conceived his emanations or "Roots" as succeeding one another and perhaps depending from one another like the links of a chain. But as he had already personified these emanations, we have the curious result that he considered them both as persons—or, to be more accurate, aspects of the Deity—and spaces of time. Nor was this all. The great spread given to the Chaldaean star-worship throughout the East by the events described in Chapter III above, had caused the stars to be accepted by every nation in the Hellenist world as the most convenient types of divinity<sup>2</sup>. The planets, including in that phrase the Sun and Moon, were all known by the names of the most important gods in the various pantheons of all the nations of antiquity, and were thought in some not very clearly defined way to be identified with the divinities whose names they bore<sup>3</sup>. Even before the time of Alexander, the Platonic cosmogony had made of the stars and planets habitations where the souls of men were supposed to rest on their way to mortal bodies<sup>4</sup>; and Philo, while admitting that the stars were the rulers of earthly

<sup>1</sup> Abel's *Orphica*, pp. 186, 254, 255.

<sup>2</sup> "The visible and generated Gods." So Alcmæon of Crotona and Xenocrates both call stars and planets gods. See Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. vi.; Plato, *Timæus*, c. xv. The prophets of the Jews, indeed, blamed their co-religionists for "worshipping the sun towards the east" as Ezekiel saw them doing in the Temple, or for "serving all the host of heaven" as Jeremiah says the inhabitants of Jerusalem did; but their reproaches make it plain that the bulk of the nation were in this respect like their Gentile neighbours.

<sup>3</sup> So Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk vi. c. 13, says the worship of the sun, moon, and stars was instituted, so that the nations might not become utterly godless.

<sup>4</sup> See Bouché-Leclercq, *L'Astrologie grecque*, Paris, 1899, p. 21, for references.

things, could do no more than remind his readers that they were not independent rulers, but only viceroys of Yahweh<sup>1</sup>. Hence Simon, when he called three of his aeons by the names of Earth, Sun, and Moon, made them places or worlds as well as persons and periods of time. It was an extraordinary complication of ideas from which none of the Gnostics who followed him succeeded in entirely freeing themselves<sup>2</sup>.

To return, however, to Simon's system of emanations. Have we any right to consider that the Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, and Water and Air, with which he peopled his second universe, were those which are perceptible by our senses, or did he regard them as existing above our ken and as merely the patterns which were in their turn reflected into our universe? Hippolytus unfortunately breaks off his quotations from the *Great Announcement* at this point, and his own report of Simon's doctrines is neither lucid nor implicitly to be trusted. Irenaeus, however, writing half a century before Hippolytus, declares that it was the female aeon Thought, whom we have seen is equivalent in the second or intermediate world to Ge or Earth, "who, comprehending the wish of the Father, descended to the lower regions, and there produced angels and the lower authorities (*αἱ κάτω ἐξουσίαι*) who made the universe (*κόσμος*)"<sup>3</sup>. If we believe, as seems most probable, that Simon carried his theory of the lower world being a reflection of the upper throughout all existing things, it follows that the second world, containing as we have seen Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, and

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *de Monarch.* Bk I. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Except perhaps Marcion. But we have so little literature remaining which can with any certainty be attributed to the Marcionites that we cannot speak with any certainty as to his phraseology. In his treatise against the Valentinians (c. xx.) Tertullian gibes at that sect for "thinking the different heavens intelligent, and for making angels of them."

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 16, § 2, p. 192, Harvey. Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* Bk I. c. 5, echoes the statement, and Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 19, p. 263, Cruice, gives what is probably the original Greek of Irenaeus. Hatch, *H. L.* pp. 185, 186, points out that Philo held not only that the angels were God's instruments in making the worlds, but the patterns after which they were made. Cf. Philo, *de Monarch.* Bk II. c. 6.

Air and Water together with "the Father" in whom the six were contained, was the pattern or paradigmatic world which was reflected in the lower universe to which we belong. In this case it is probable that the six "Roots" again changed their generic name, and after having been called powers (*δυνάμεις*) in the primal world, and aeons in the second, were now designated angels and authorities. If this conjecture is right, we have here a parallel to the chain of being fabled by the Orphics which, beginning with the gods, descended through demi-gods, heroes, and demons down to men. An accurate knowledge of the different ranks of this supramundane hierarchy was, as has been said, of great importance for magical purposes such as exorcism, and its description occupied a great part of the Enochian literature<sup>1</sup>.

Simon, however, had still to account for the creation of man and the part which he played in the scheme of the universe. His reverence for Moses prevented him from directly contradicting the statement in Genesis that Yahweh "formed man out of the dust of the ground," and this he echoes in the words of the Septuagint, which speaks of God moulding (*ἐπλασε*) man by "taking dust (*χοῦς*) from the Earth (*Γῆ*)." The part here played by the Yahweh of Genesis he transfers to "the Father" of his second or intermediate world<sup>2</sup>; and as Genesis says that God made man in his own image, he is also compelled to say that man was originally made in the likeness of the Father. But "the Father" of Simon's intermediate world was, as we have seen, an hermaphrodite, or rather a male containing a female power within himself<sup>3</sup>. Hence man was originally both male and female, or in the words of the *Great Announcement*

<sup>1</sup> These "orders" of supernatural beings passed into orthodox Christianity. Cf. the *εἶτε θρόνοι, εἶτε κυριότητες, εἶτε ἀρχαί, εἶτε ἐξουσίαι* of Coloss. i. 16, whence the "Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Princedoms, Powers" of Milton. The functions of all these different orders are set out by Dionysius the Areopagite so-called, and present a certain likeness to Simon's ideas as given in the text. See Lupton in *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.v. Dionysius.

<sup>2</sup> That is Zeus, "Father of Gods and Men"; not the Juppiter Optimus Maximus of later philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly an allusion to the "rib" story of Genesis.



“not simple, but double according to image and resemblance<sup>1</sup>.” But this was clearly not the man of this world as we know him, but the Heavenly or Archetypal Man who remained in the world above ours, and was, as Philo held, a man-woman<sup>2</sup>. How did Simon account for the separation of the sexes, and its influence upon subsequent humanity?

The answer to this question involves Simon’s ideas as to the cause of evil in this world and the means by which man can escape from it. Man was, as we have seen, formed out of dust, but to make him, in the words of Genesis, “a living soul,” it was necessary that he should be animated by the breath (*πνεῦμα*) of the Divinity. So efficiently was this done that everyone, as Simon said, has within him potentially but not in act, “that which is blessed and incorruptible,” that is to say, “He who standeth, hath stood and will stand,” or in other words the “Father” of the intermediate world. “He it is,” he goes on to say, “who stood above in the Unbegotten Power, who stands below, coming into being by reflection (*ἐν εἰκόνι*) in the rush of the waters, and will stand above by the side of the blessed and Unbegotten Power if he should receive reflection or image (*ἐὰν ἐξεικονισθῇ*)<sup>3</sup>.” For “there are three who stand, and unless there are three aeons that stand, the unbegotten one, who according to them [Qy. the Hebrews?] was borne over the face of the water, is not in her proper place in the universe (*οὐ κοσμεῖται*)<sup>4</sup>. The which unbegotten one is fashioned by resemblance as perfect and heavenly, but becomes, in regard to Thought alone, inferior to the Unbegotten Power.” This Unbegotten Power, he goes on to say in words that remind one of several different myths<sup>5</sup>, is the “One power cloven in twain

<sup>1</sup> οὐχ ἀπλᾶν, ἀλλὰ διπλοῦν κατ’ εἰκόνα καὶ καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν. Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 14, p. 253, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> So Philo, *Legg. Allegor.* iii. p. 1089, Mangey; *Quis rer. divin.* p. 503 *id.* Cf. Döllinger, *Jud. und Heid.* Eng. ed. ii. p. 430.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 17, p. 259, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> See last note.

<sup>5</sup> So Iacchos is at once the father, son, and spouse of Persephone. Horus is by his identification with Osiris in like manner the son, spouse and brother of Isis. The seeking and finding seems to be an allusion to this last pair. Cf. *P.S.B.A.* 1914, p. 93.

above and below, who gives birth to itself, increases itself, seeks itself, finds itself, being its own mother, its own father, its own sister, its own spouse (*σύζυγος*), its own daughter, its own son, a mother-father [and is] *one*, being the root of all the universes<sup>1</sup>." It was the Thought of this Power who was charged with bringing the Divine Spark to this world; but apparently, while she was brooding over the face of the waters, she was seized by the angels and authorities whom she had produced, "through motives of jealousy, because they were unwilling to be looked upon as the progeny of any other being<sup>2</sup>." These words are put into the mouth of Simon by Irenaeus, who goes on to say that Thought was thus prevented from returning to the Father and was shut up in a human body. At this point, the account of Irenaeus agrees with that of the *Philosophumena* which narrates that (according to Simon) the world-making angels caused Thought (*Ennoia*) to enter one body after another, including that of Helen of Troy (*causa teterrima belli*), until she finally entered into the body of Simon's companion Helena whom he found in a brothel at Tyre<sup>3</sup>. Hippolytus says, however, that Simon made up this part of the story out of shame as regards his disciples<sup>4</sup> in order to explain his companying with Helena, and it may be noticed that he nowhere quotes the *Great Announcement* in its support<sup>5</sup>. Epiphanius, who seems

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 17, p. 259, Cruice. For the μήτηρ, πατήρ of the text it is necessary to read μητροπάτωρ unless we are to believe that the author is here repeating without rhyme or reason the statement already made in the same sentence that the power he is describing is its own mother and its own father. The expression μητροπάτωρ is found in an address to Zeus attributed to Orpheus and quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* Bk v. c. 14. Cf. Frgs. 238, 239 of Abel's *Orphica*. He remarks concerning it that, by this μητροπάτωρ, Orpheus meant not only birth from the Μη ὄν, but also "gave occasion to those who bring in the emanations and perhaps imagine a spouse of God,"—which gives some colour to the surmise that Clement may have been acquainted with Simon's writings.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 16, § 2, p. 192, Harvey. A similar motive was assigned by the Orphics for the murder of the infant Dionysos by the Titans.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, Bk i. c. 16, § 19, pp. 263, 264, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> τοὺς μαθητὰς αἰδοῦμενος τοῦτον τὸν μῦθον ἔπλασεν, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 264, Cruice.

to have used the same documents as Irenaeus, gives a different reason for the conduct of the world-making angels from that of Irenaeus, and makes out that they were seduced by the beauty of "Epinoia," as he calls Ennoia or Thought, the female aeon who had come down, and detained her below out of sensual desire<sup>1</sup>. Both Irenaeus and Epiphanius are agreed that Simon in some way "redeemed" Helena, although they do not say in what way, and Hippolytus declares that Simon having purified Helena, in like manner brought salvation to men by his own discernment<sup>2</sup>. Why Simon should thus have power of salvation he does not explain directly, but he, Irenaeus, and Epiphanius alike tell us, by what seems to be a wilful or unconscious misinterpretation of the account in the New Testament<sup>3</sup>, that Simon gave himself out as the Supreme God, who, seeing that the angels mismanaged this world from their desire for rule, came here to put it right and descended through the different worlds, changing his shape in each to accord with that of the rulers therein, until he appeared here as man, "although he was not a man<sup>4</sup>." Hippolytus further says, as does Irenaeus, that

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, *op. cit.* Bk I., *Haer.* xxi. c. 11 (p. 125 of vol. II. pt 1. of Oehler). Probably this idea is a mere echo of the story in Genesis vi. 2, of the "sons of God" being captivated by the "daughters of men," which is much insisted on in the Enochian literature. Cf. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme; La Séduction des Archontes* or Chapter XIII, *infra* for later elaborations of the legend.

<sup>2</sup> Τὴν δὲ Ἑλένην λυτρωσάμενος, οὕτως τοῖς ἀνθρώποις σωτηρίαν παρέσχε διὰ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιγνώσεως. See note 3 p. 190, *supra*. The ἐπίγνωσις of the text seems to indicate that Simon discovered the way of salvation not by any revelation from a higher power, but by his own intelligence and examination. Cf. what he says (Hippolytus, *Phil.* Bk VI. c. 16, p. 256, Crouce) about the knowledge of Gentile writings being sufficient for the ἐπίγνωσις τῶν ὅλων.

<sup>3</sup> Acts viii. 9, 10, only says that Simon bewitched the people of Samaria, giving himself out to be some great one (λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν μέγαν); and that it was the people who said of him: "This man is the so-called great power of God" (Οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ καλούμενη μεγάλη). He was therefore only in the same position as Paul and Barnabas in Phrygia when they were hailed by the populace as Zeus and Hermes respectively. Cf. Acts xiv. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 16, § 2, p. 193, Harvey; Epiphanius as in n. 1 *supra*. This episode of the Saviour changing his form so as not to be

Simon was alleged "to suffer in Judaea in the likeness of Jesus, although in appearance only, and to have appeared to the Jews as Son, to the Samaritans as Father, and to the other nations as the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup>." His death he accounts for by the story, found nowhere else in post-Christian literature, that at some place, the name of which has slipped out of the text of the *Philosophumena*, Simon

"taught sitting under a plane-tree. Moreover, exposure being at hand through long delay, he said that if he were buried alive he would rise again the third day. And a grave having been dug by his orders by his disciples, he directed that he should be buried. His disciples did what he commanded, but he remained there to this day. For he was not Christ<sup>2</sup>."

In all this account, Hippolytus gives an entirely different account from that of the Clementines, with the manifest purpose of holding Simon up to obloquy as one of the "false Christs" predicted in the New Testament. It is obvious also that, so far from giving us Simon's pre-Christian teaching, he is here

recognized by the powers of the heavens through which he passes on his way to earth, is a favourite one in the post-Christian Apocryphal literature. Cf. R. H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, p. 62. In the *Pistis Sophia* (for which see Chapter X, *infra*), Jesus in like manner changes His appearance in each heaven on His descent to earth. When He returns in His proper shape the spirits in every "place" into which He enters fling themselves on their faces and cry: "How did the Lord of the Universe change himself, so that we knew him not?" : see p. 21 Copt. *et al.* The "Docetic" theory which made the earthly body of Jesus a phantasm or illusion appears again in the heresy of the Valentinians and elsewhere. See Chapter IX, *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* p. 265, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 20, p. 267, Cruice. The story here told is in direct contradiction to the received tradition of the Church, that Simon met his death when attempting to fly heavenward before the Emperor Nero. That given in the text seems to be taken from the doings of some Indian Yogi, and the idea of Simon teaching "sitting under a plane tree" is distinctly Buddhistic. It is mentioned by no other writer than Hippolytus; but Justin Martyr (*First Apolog.* c. 26) says that he persuaded his followers that he would never die, and that some in Justin's day still believed this. A sort of echo of it appears in the *Acts of Peter and Paul*, where it is said that the body of Simon after being dashed to pieces was kept by the Emperor Nero for three days "to see whether he would rise again."

handing down a garbled account of some tradition of the heresiarch's disciples after his death.

That the stories told by the Fathers, except when they are quoting immediately from the *Great Announcement*, are not a trustworthy account of Simon's doctrines is evident from their manifest inconsistency. If Simon's disciples believed, as Hippolytus says, in the lawfulness of promiscuous intercourse, why should he feel called upon to justify to them by an artifice his connection with Helena? If, too, Simon, or the Supreme Being in his likeness, came down from the highest heaven to earth for the sake of redeeming his spouse Epinoia there held captive, why did he not return with her when recovered, and for what purpose did he simulate death in Judaea? Nor is there any plausible reason assigned for the angels' detention of Epinoia on earth by Hippolytus, which he attributes, like Irenaeus before him, to jealousy and the desire for rule, any more than by Epiphanius, who will have it to be caused by their concupiscence—a story probably derived from the account of the Watchers in the *Book of Enoch*. Hippolytus makes Epinoia come to earth to establish, instead of taking away, the rule of the angels, who were by his account her own progeny; and if the angels were, as Epiphanius says, inflamed with love for her, the last thing they would be likely to do would be to transform her out of her first and heavenly shape, and finally place her in a brothel—as they are said to have done with Helena, Simon's mistress.

The key to Simon's theory on the connexion between the salvation of mankind and its division into sexes is probably to be found in a paragraph in the *Philosophumena* in which Hippolytus seems to quote directly from the *Great Announcement*:

"And because," he says, "the beginning of the generation of things which are begotten<sup>1</sup> is from fire, he [Simon] devises (κατανοεί) a certain similar figure. Generation of all such things exists, [and] the beginning of the desire of generation comes from fire. So, for example, to desire changeable generation is called being inflamed

<sup>1</sup> ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς γενέσεως ἐστὶ τῶν γεννωμένων.

with love. But the fire, which is one, undergoes two changes. In the man," he says, "the blood which is hot and yellow as typifying fire is changed into seed; but in the woman, the self-same blood is changed into milk<sup>1</sup>. And the [result of the ?] change of the masculine blood is begetting; but the [result of the ?] change of the feminine, the nourishment of that which is begotten<sup>2</sup>. This," he says, "is the flaming sword turning both ways to guard the way to the Tree of Life. For the blood turns into seed and milk, and that power becomes [at once] mother and father of the things which are born, and the increase of those which are nursed, having no need of any external help and being sufficient unto itself. The Tree of Life," he says, "is guarded by the flaming sword turning both ways, as we have said, [and] the seventh power which contains all things, and which is stored up in the six powers, [comes forth ?] from the sword. For, if the flaming sword did not turn both ways, that beautiful tree would be corrupted and destroyed. But if the Word which is stored up potentially in them (the six powers), being the lord of the proper place, is turned into seed and milk, within it is born the Word of souls, beginning from the smallest spark, which will be magnified and will increase and will become a boundless power, unchangeable in the unchanging aeon, and it is born no more until [it reaches ?] the boundless aeon<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus*, Bk I. c. 6) says practically the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> Καὶ γίνεται ἡ τοῦ ἄρρενος τροπή, γένεσις· ἡ δὲ τῆς θηλείας τροπή, τροφή τοῦ γεννωμένου. Note the curious jingle between τροπή and τροφή, γένεσις and γεννωμένου.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, Bk VI. c. 1, § 17, pp. 259, 260, Cruice. That this refers to the conjunction of man with his twin-soul or affinity is certain from Hippolytus' former quotation from the *Apophysis*, that man was made by God οὐχ ἀπλοῦν, ἀλλὰ διπλοῦν κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν "not single, but two-fold according to copy and resemblance": and that he will "perish with the world" unless he be made into the likeness of the Spirit who was borne upon the face of the waters, and who was, like that of which it was the reflection, androgyne (Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 1, p. 253, Cruice). "But if he be made into this likeness," Hippolytus continues, "and is born from an indivisible point as it is written in the *Apophysis*, that which is small will become great. And that which is great will exist in the boundless and incorruptible aeon, which will not be born again." Besides the idea of the indivisible point, which we shall meet with again in the Bruce Papyrus (for which see Chapter X, *infra*), it seems

The meaning of this very complicated and confused imagery—which we may be sure Hippolytus has purposely made as obscure and ridiculous as possible—seems to be this. In the two superior or heavenly worlds which we have called the primal and the second, the “roots” are male and female after the model of the Supreme Being. But this only means that the female is the external manifestation of the male, *within* whom she has at one time been contained. No thought of sex, as we understand it, enters into their relations, and no progeny follows from their conjugation, the lower world coming into life after the pattern of the upper by an impulse which, although due in the first instance to the male, is translated into action by the female member of the first syzygy. But with our universe and the appearance of man, a change in the system takes place. Although our world, constituted after the heavenly model, contains the three pairs, Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, Air and Water, and is animated by the breath of life brought from above by Epinoia or Ennoia, man is formed from previously-existing matter and is therefore largely made up of an element hostile or repugnant to God. Lest the Divine spark within him should free itself from matter and return to the world above, each human soul has been divided, as Plato tells us in the *Symposium*<sup>1</sup>, and the two parts placed in different bodies so that the male is imperfect without the female and the female without the male, and the soul can make no effort to raise itself in the world of being until it meets and is conjoined with its affinity. This is probably in Simon’s view the device evident that Simon was here teaching that those who find their twin-souls will rise in the scale of being and thus escape the cycle of changing existences dreaded by the Orphics (see Chapter IV, *supra*). An explanation of the metaphor of the flaming sword is suggested later. See note 3 on p. 67 of vol. II, *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, cc. 17, 18. Diotima later on in the same Dialogue says that it is an old story that those who are in love are seeking their lost half. In one of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia*, it is said that “the servants of the Sphere of Destiny” after making the soul of man, divide it into two parts, and give one part to a man and another to a woman who are then bound to come together (no matter how far apart they may be) and to unite, when a new soul is the result (*Pistis Sophia*, p. 346, Copt.).

of the angels, who have brought it about, according to Hippolytus, in order that Epinoia, the mother of life, may remain longer in the world and therefore prolong their rule<sup>1</sup>. But they are defeated by the Divine arrangement, which compels the two parts of the soul, after having once entered upon the round of mutable generation (ἡ μεταβλητὴ γένεσις), to change into one body after another according to the Orphic theory of transmigration until each meets with its twin. Thus did the soul of Helen of Troy pass from one body into another until in the shape of Helena of Tyre it met with its own affinity in the body of Simon. Then it became again bisexual after the image of the boundless power to which it would again rise. Thus must it be with all mankind until all the souls are thus disentangled from matter<sup>2</sup>. According to Hippolytus, this event is to coincide with the deliverance (λύσις) of the world, which seems to mean that it is to be freed from the rule of the angels. Irenaeus and Epiphanius twist this into the assertion that it is to be dissolved, while one of the later Gnostic documents says that it is to be "caught up," that is to say, reabsorbed by the world of which it is the image. But Hippolytus expressly

<sup>1</sup> So in the *Pistis Sophia* (p. 37, Copt.), Jesus says that the angels bound in the stars were, until His coming, in the habit of turning about and devouring their own matter, from which the souls of men and other animals were made, in order that their rule might endure the longer.

<sup>2</sup> Probably this is the meaning of the well-known saying of Jesus, generally quoted as coming from the *Gospel according to the Egyptians*, in answer to Salome's enquiry as to the time of the coming of His kingdom: "Ὅταν τὸ τῆς αἰσχύνης ἔνδυμα πατήσῃτε, καὶ ὅταν γένηται τὰ δύο ἓν, καὶ τὸ ἔξω ὡς τὸ ἔσω; καὶ τὸ ἄρρεν μετὰ τῆς θηλείας, οὔτε ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ." "When ye tread under foot the garment of shame, and when the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female, neither male nor female." See Hilgenfeld, *N. T. extra Canon. recept.*, Lipsiae, 1884, vol. iv. p. 44. "The outside as the inside" may refer to the body and the rib which was in the Genesis story taken out of it. So the *Pistis Sophia* (p. 378, Copt.) speaks of "the Light of Lights, the places of Truth and Goodness, the place of the Holy of Holies, the place of the Holy of all Holies, the place in which there is neither male nor female, nor shape, but Light everlasting, unspeakable." Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 146, Cruice, carrying this a step further, speaks of heaven as a place "where there is neither male nor female, but a new creature, a new man who is androgyne (ἀρρηνόθηλος)."



includes this last doctrine among those invented by "those who imitated the error" of Simon Magus, or in other words by his successors<sup>1</sup>, and it need not therefore be here discussed.

Whence Simon derived the doctrine of which we get glimpses in the *Great Announcement* will probably remain in doubt until we recover more fragments of that document. It appears likely, however, that he drew from a number of sources. Even in his day and after the wholesale depopulation of Samaria by the Syrians, Egyptians, and Jews, there must have remained many of the inhabitants who were lineal descendants of that mixed Semitic and Persian stock who "feared the Lord and served brazen images." Hence his speculations may well have been influenced by the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism and Mazdeism, and some have thought that they can see in them traces of the primitive fire worship of the Magi<sup>2</sup>. Yet he need not have gone so far, for, as we have seen, his idea of fire as the origin of all things might well be taken from a too literal interpretation of a passage in the Samaritan Pentateuch. So with regard to the six "roots," although they may have been mere copies of the Persian Amshaspands, they may also have come from a Pythagorean or Orphic source, since Athamas the Pythagorean is said to have taught that "there are four roots—fire, water, air, earth; for from these is the genesis of what is produced," and a verse of Empedocles is preserved which makes the same assertion<sup>3</sup>. The likeness of Simon's system to Egyptian and Alexandrian teaching is even closer. In ancient Egypt there was, as M. Maspero thinks, a well-defined system of correspondences including three worlds, each of which was a likeness or reflection of the preceding. At Hermopolis, too, there was worshipped an ogdoad or family of four pairs of gods and goddesses who on the same authority were merely attributes of one higher deity<sup>4</sup>. So in the tract *de Iside et Osiride*<sup>5</sup>, we are told that genesis or coming into being is the image or reflection in matter of that which really exists, and

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, Bk vi. c. 1, § 19, p. 266, Cruice; Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 16, § 2, p. 194, Harvey; Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxi. c. 2, p. 124, Oehler.

<sup>2</sup> Franck, *Le Gnost. Ég.* p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* II. pp. 187 and 385.

<sup>5</sup> *de Is. et Os.* cc. LIII. LIV. and LVI.

that Horus, who seems here to represent the perceptible world, is the *εἰκὼν* or image of the *νοητὸς κόσμος* or ideal world, and is the child of this last world and matter. After all, there is little more in this than an extension of Plato's theory of ideas which are the paradigms or patterns of perceptible things: but as Simon, according to the Clementines<sup>1</sup>, had studied in Alexandria he may well have acquired such a notion either from Plato's writings direct, or, as is more likely, from the Alexandrian religion of Serapis and Isis as set forth in the tract in question.

Of the history of the Simonian sect, we know very little more than has been said. The Fathers accuse the Simonians of leading immoral lives, of teaching the advisability of promiscuous intercourse, and of being addicted to magic<sup>2</sup>. Irenaeus declares that they worshipped an image of Simon in the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the shape of Athena<sup>3</sup>, to which Hippolytus adds that they were exceedingly angry if any one ventured to call these statues either Simon or Helena and instantly cast him forth of the sect as being ignorant of their mysteries<sup>4</sup>. Eusebius—a very late witness—adds to this that they worshipped these images with “prostrations and incense and sacrifices and libations<sup>5</sup>,” which taken with the other statements seems to show that the Simonians, or perhaps only the pre-Christian followers of Simon, really took part in the worship of the Greek gods Zeus and Athena, possibly by way of complaisance with the Greek and Roman rulers of Samaria, and that the likening of their statues to Simon and Helena was only the patristic gloss on the fact. Epiphanius goes further and attributes to them “mysteries of iniquity” and secret and obscene rites, including the filthy parody of the Eucharist depicted by the late J. K. Huysmans in his novel of *Là-Bas*<sup>6</sup>. But this also was an accusation common to the adherents and opponents of Christianity at the time he wrote.

<sup>1</sup> Clem. *Hom.* II. c. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 16, § 3, p. 194, Harvey; Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 1, § 20, p. 266, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus and Hippolytus where last quoted.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus where last quoted.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk II. c. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* XXI. c. 4 (p. 125, vol. II. pt I., Oehler).

He also says that their sacrifices were offered to "the Father of the Universes" (τῶν ὅλων) through the rulers and authorities<sup>1</sup>, and that they thought that the God of the Jews was one of the angels in this lower universe who created man and divided the nations among them by lot<sup>2</sup>, an idea of which there is a trace in the Book of Daniel<sup>3</sup>. But it is plain that Epiphanius, in his desire to prove that Simon is the parent of all subsequent heresy, is here mixing together the opinions of different Gnostic sects with a result inconsistent even in his own eyes. That the later Simonians had secret rites after the manner of those described by Lucian in the case of Alexander of Abonoteichos<sup>4</sup> is likely enough, but rests on no real proof<sup>5</sup>.

Of the extent and persistence of the religion set on foot by Simon we have some few indications, although these, too, hardly agree with one another. Irenaeus declares that he was succeeded in the leadership of the sect by Menander<sup>6</sup>, another Samaritan, and this is confirmed by Epiphanius, Philaster, and all the lesser writers on heresy down to and including Eusebius<sup>7</sup>. Although there seems nothing new in the doctrine which they assign to Menander, it is very probable that, after Simon's death, the tenets of the sect underwent a good deal of modification. According to Theodoret, the Simonians spread chiefly in Syria, Phrygia, and Rome<sup>8</sup>. Justin Martyr, writing in the reign of Antoninus Pius, speaks of their school as still existing apparently in Rome<sup>9</sup>. Origen, in the following reign, says indeed

<sup>1</sup> See last note.

<sup>2</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* xxiv. c. 1, p. 145, Oehler. It is here attributed to Basilides, but Epiphanius has before said that this last borrowed his ideas from "Simon and Satornilus."

<sup>3</sup> Dan. x. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *Pseudomantis*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Epiphanius says that Simon taught none could be saved unless he learned [Simon's] system of initiation (μυσταγωγία). See Epiph. *Haer.* xxi. c. 4, p. 127, Oehler.

<sup>6</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 17, p. 195, Harvey.

<sup>7</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* xxii. p. 133, Oehler; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk III. c. 26. Cf. Justin Martyr, *First Apol.* c. 26. Schmiedel, *s.v.* Simon Magus in *Encyc. Bibl.*, says the exact contrary—a curious slip.

<sup>8</sup> Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* I. 1.

<sup>9</sup> See note 7 *supra*.

in his tract against Celsus that there were no Simonians to be found anywhere throughout the world<sup>1</sup>; but he was probably mistaken in this, as Eusebius in the reign of Constantine speaks of them as still numerous, although forced to hide themselves<sup>2</sup>. After this, and so soon as the Church, now triumphant, began in her turn to persecute, they no doubt either became converted to Christianity or joined other sects.

In these matters, as in many others concerning the Gnostics, the Fathers of the Church were badly informed. The Gnostic indifference to outward forms of religion made it very easy for any body of Gnostics to conceal themselves in time of persecution<sup>3</sup>, and thus to resist in the most practical way any attempt to estimate their true strength, or the relations of the different sects to one another. Gnosticism was, as the Church was to find out later, a hydra, the heads of which when cut off renewed themselves with amazing rapidity. Moreover, the very essence of Gnosticism was secrecy for all but the initiated, and if we may judge from the words of the *Great Announcement* quoted above, the Simonians took abundant care when they committed any of their doctrines to writing that the result should be unintelligible without a good deal of previous instruction. But if the fragments quoted are, as seems fairly certain, the work either of Simon Magus himself or of some prominent and early member of his school, the Fathers were abundantly justified in regarding him as the source of all subsequent Gnosticism. The syncretic religion which they unfold seems to have been admirably adapted to catch those "barbarian" enquirers, of whom there were evidently many in the first years of our era, who were trying by might and main to reconcile the traditions of Judaism with the Greek learning and culture for the first time brought within their reach. The system of terribly forced interpretation of the Jewish scriptures employed by the Simonians was

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Celsus*, Bk VI. c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* Bk II. c. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, c. 1. Eusebius, *H. E.* Bk II. c. 1, says, speaking of his own times, that those who follow Simon's most scoundrelly (*μαρτωράτην*) heresy were baptized into the Church, and kept their own doctrines in secret till detected and expelled. Cf. Origen, *c. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 11.

probably their own invention, and would certainly never have passed muster in a community possessed of a modicum of literary sense<sup>1</sup>; yet it enabled them, as has been said, to turn their backs upon the plain meaning of the books of the Old Testament. By their doctrine of emanation, whether derived from Persian sources or not, they contrived, perhaps for the first time, to bridge the huge gulf fixed by the philosophy and physics of the time between their Supreme Being and the gross matter which was thought to exist independently of and in opposition to him; while their scheme of redemption, like that of the Orphics from whom they apparently borrowed, went far, as they boasted, to rob death of its terrors.

These features we find reproduced in the teachings of nearly every later sect and school into which we shall have to enquire, and although our information as to their doctrines is not exact enough to enable us to determine the extent of the obligations of all of them to the teaching of Simon, the chances are that in every case there was a more or less conscious borrowing. Nor did the influence of the Samaritan *magus* cease with the suppression of the many heresies which the Fathers declared to be inspired by him. His speculations as to the succession of heavens and of orders of heavenly beings passed into the teaching of the Church<sup>2</sup> and obtained too firm a footing there to be dislodged until the German Reformation. The memory of them extended even beyond its pale, and while, in the viii<sup>th</sup> century of our era, they came to inspire such cosmology as is taught in the Koran, the system of Sephiroth or successive

<sup>1</sup> It was of course quite different from the Cabalistic methods, ridiculous as those were, of the Essenes and other Jews, from the acrostics of the Orphics, and from the allegories of Philo. With a touching belief in the verbal inspiration of the Pentateuch, Simon and his followers claimed that every word of it must be true and a revelation even when transferred into another context. Thus they claimed to teach obstetrics from geographical phrases. The only modern parallel is to be found among the Puritans of our own Civil War, who, as Sir Walter Scott wrote, were accustomed to pervert the language of Scripture by adapting it to modern events, and kept a Bible lying on the Table of the House for reference as to the better conduct of its business.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Turmel, "L'Angéologie depuis le faux Denys l'Aréopagite," *Rev. d'Hist. et Litt. Rel.* Paris, t. iv. No. 3 (1898), pp. 219 *sqq.*

emanations of the Deity, which underlies the farrago of mystical nonsense called in the Middle Ages the Cabala of the Jews, is directly derived from them. It may even be said that the influence of Simon's doctrines is not even now extinct in Europe, for in the writings of Swedenborg, which still find exponents, many of his ideas seem to be revived.

That Simon's system as described in the *Great Announcement* was the result either of deep philosophic speculation or of original thought can hardly be said. Its one novel feature was the rather clumsy fusion of the Orphic cosmogony with the Mosaic account of creation, which reads like a parody on Philo's well-thought-out doctrine. Philo was born, apparently, about 25 B.C., and was therefore in all probability a few years older than Simon, so that such a parody is not altogether impossible. One of the main differences between the two systems is that to the asceticism of Philo and the Essenes Simon opposed, not perhaps a recommendation to licence, but a theory making the union of the sexes part of the scheme for the redemption of mankind. By so doing, he probably made a much stronger appeal to Samaritans and Jews alike than did the strict celibacy demanded by Orphics, Essenes, and the other pre-Christian Gnostics. It is probable also that he included in his propaganda some sort of thaumaturgy or wonder-working of the kind employed, according to Lucian, by Alexander of Abonoteichos and, according to Irenaeus, by the Jewish impostor Marcus. Although the stories about this in the *Clementines* are manifestly fiction, we cannot absolutely reject the universal testimony of the Fathers that Simon and his followers made use of incantations and magical arts, and these are probably the "sorceries" with which the writer of the Acts declares he bewitched the Samaritans. Charlatanism, or more or less conscious imposture of this kind, was rife, as will be presently shown, among the lower classes of Palestine in his day, and would agree well with the bombastic language of the extracts from the *Great Announcement* which Hippolytus has preserved for us.













